

THE FREE PRESS JOURNAL

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NATION

Cash row: Probe panel confirms allegations against Justice Varma, CJI seeks his reply



GAMES

Rohit announces retirement from Test cricket, will continue to play ODIs



Cinema Actress Kangana Ranaut lauds 'Operation Sindoor'

Edit Retaliation a must, but so is dialogue once calm returns



FOCUSSED, MEASURED, NON-ESCALATORY | India strikes nine terror targets linked to Lashkar-e-Tayyeba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen in Pakistan as well as in PoK

PAKISTAN PUNISHED



Damage assessment: Pakistani troops inspect destruction wrought by Indian defence forces

—AGENCIES

Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar
NEW DELHI

Exactly a fortnight after the Pahalgalam terror attack in which 26 people were identified on the basis of religion and killed by terrorist, India launched "Operation Sindoor" early on Thursday morning hitting nine terrorist training camps and launch pads inside Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir with 24 missile strikes.

The missile strikes, which took place within a span of 25 minutes, left a large number of suspected terrorists dead and injured at the nine locations at Muzaffarabad, Kotli, Bahawalpur, Rawalakot, Chakswari, Bhimber, Neelum Valley, Jhelum, and Chakwa in Pakistan and as per unconfirmed reports around 70 terrorists were killed and another 60 were injured in these.

Media reports from Pakistan also cited Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar claiming that 10 members of his family and four aides were killed in the attack at Bahawalpur. Besides the JeM, the Indian armed forces had also targeted bases of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba, whose offshoot, The Resistance Front, had claimed responsibility for the Pahalgalam

attack.

The first strike took place around 1 a.m. The Additional Director General of Public Information of Indian Army posted on "X" about it with "#JusticeServed". It wrote that "Target 1" was Abbas Terrorist Camp at Kotli at a distance of 13 Km from LoC (POJK). Describing it as the "nerve centre for training suicide bombers of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)", the Army said this centre that provided "key training infrastructure for over 50 terrorists" was destroyed at 1.04 am.

At 1-44 am, the Ministry of Defence announced the armed forces had launched Operation Sindoor hitting terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and PoK. It categorically stated the actions were "focused, measured and non-escalatory in nature" and that "no Pakistani military facilities have been targeted." In a clear message that India did not desire escalation, the note had also stated that India "demonstrated considerable restraint in selection of targets and method of execution".

The MoD had also specified that a detailed press conference would be held at 10 am. In the morning, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri briefed the media about Operation Sindoor.

► Contd on | Nation



Misri focus on TRF

FPJ News Service
NEW DELHI

In explaining New Delhi's response to the Pahalgalam attack, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri brought focus on the terrorist group calling itself The Resistance Front, a Lashkar-e-Taiba proxy.

He elaborated: "A group calling itself The Resistance Front (TRF) has claimed responsibility for the attack. This group is a front for the UN-proscribed Pakistani terrorist group, Lashkar-e-Tayyeba. It is notable that India had given inputs about the TRF in the half-yearly report to the Monitoring Team of the UN's 1267 Sanctions Committee in May and November 2024, bringing out its role as a cover for Pakistan-based terrorist groups. Earlier too, in December 2023, India had informed the monitoring team about Lashkar and Jaish-e-Mohammad operating through small terror groups such as the TRF."

It was in this context, Misri pointed out, that Pakistan's pressure to remove references to TRF in the April 25 UN Security Council Press State-

Our intelligence has developed an accurate picture of the planners and backers of this team

Vikram Misri

ment was notable. Minsri said that probe into the attack had "brought out the communication nodes of terrorists in and to Pakistan. The claims made by The Resistance Front and their reporting by known social media handles of the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba speak for themselves. Identification of the attackers, based on eyewitness accounts, as well as other information available to law enforcement agencies, has also progressed. Our intelligence has developed an accurate picture of the planners and backers of this team." He said, "The features of this attack also tie in with Pakistan's long track record of perpetrating cross-border terror in India, which is well documented, and beyond question."

► Contd on | Nation

WANT IT TO END, CAN MEDIATE: TRUMP

Washington: US President Donald Trump said he wants India and Pakistan to stop attacking each other and offered to help the two nations work out differences amid rising tensions. Speaking at the Oval Office, "It is so terrible. I get along with both. I know both very well. I want to see them work it out, I want to see them stop."

Hopefully, they can stop now. They have done tit-for-tat. We have a good relationship with both. If I can do anything to help, I will be there."

Earlier, Trump said, "It's a shame, he said, adding, "We heard about it just as we were walking in the doors of the Oval (Office). I guess people knew something was going to

happen based on a little bit of the past." "They've been fighting for a long time. They've been fighting for many, many decades and centuries, actually, if you really think about it." He added, "No, I just hope it ends very quickly."

► Contd on | Nation

Related reports in Mumbai & Nation

Opposition unites around response

Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar
NEW DELHI

Opposition parties on Wednesday hailed the Indian Armed forces in one voice after they carried out precision strikes against terrorist organisations in Pakistan and Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir in response to the Pahalgalam terror attack.

While some of the leaders were brief in their appreciation or just saluted the nation and the forces, others went on to state what they stood for.

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi led the Congress in declaring that he was "Proud of our Armed Forces." He also wrote "Jai Hind!" along with it in his post on "X". His sister and Congress general secretary and MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was more elaborate and posted: "We are extremely proud of our army. Our brave soldiers protect our freedom and integrity. May God protect them and give them immense courage to face challenges with patience and bravery. Jai Hind."

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, who had only recently criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not preventing the Pahalgalam attack despite intelligence inputs, stated that "India has an unflinching national policy

ALL-PARTY MEET TODAY

In the wake of Operation Sindoor, the Centre has convened an all-party meeting on Thursday at 11 a.m. to brief the nation's political leadership on the strategic strikes. Union Minister Kiren Rijiju made the announcement on Wednesday and wrote on X, "Govt has called an All Party leaders meeting at 11 am on 8th May, 2025 at Committee Room: G-074, in the Parliament Library Building, Parliament Complex in New Delhi." Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan and formally briefed her on the operation.

against all forms of terrorism emanating from Pakistan and PoK. We are extremely proud of our Indian Armed Forces who have stuck terror camps in Pakistan and PoK.

► Contd on | Nation

PM CHOSE CODENAME

Agencies
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi personally chose the codename 'Operation Sindoor,' sources told PTI. It is a reference to 'sindoor' (vermillion) that many Hindu women wear as a signifier of marriage. In the Pahalgalam attack, Hindu men were singled out and shot dead in front of their wives and children by terrorists.

Sources also told ANI that all through the night Prime Min-



ister Narendra Modi constantly monitored the Operation Sindoor.

Care had also been taken in the choice of targets to exclude military ones. Foreign Secre-

Care taken to select non-military targets and to ensure no civilian casualties. Operation was conducted from Indian soil.

tary Vikram Misri was to explain later that, "Our actions have been focused, measured and non-escalatory in nature. No Pakistani military facilities

have been targeted. India has demonstrated considerable restraint in the selection of targets and method of execution," the statement said.

For the mission, precision strike weapon systems from the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force, including loitering munitions, were deployed, sources confirmed to ANI. A loitering munition is a type of precision weapon that hovers over a target area to locate

► Contd on | Nation

Sajjad Gul, Lashkar link to Pahalgalam

PTI
NEW DELHI

Sheikh Sajjad Gul, a 50-year-old Kashmiri and head of Lashkar-e-Taiba proxy The Resistance Front (TRF), has emerged as the mastermind of the Pahalgalam terror attack, officials revealed on Wednesday.

Holed up in the Cantonment town of Rawalpindi, Pakistan, under the patronage of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Gul, who also goes by the alias of Sajjad Ahmed Sheikh, has been a planner of a number of terror attacks, including tar-



geted killings between 2020 and 2024 in Central and South Kashmir, grenade attacks in Central Kashmir in 2023, ambush of J&K police personnel in Bijbehra in Anantnag, Gangir, Z-Morh Tunnel attack in Ganderbal. The NIA had

designated him a terrorist in April 2022, with a reward of Rs 10 lakh.

The official said that during the investigation into the Pahalgalam attack, links and some communications have been traced back to Gul. Used by Pakistan's external snooping agency ISI as a Kashmiri face of the local Punjabi-dominated Lashkar-e-Taiba, Sheikh was educated in Srinagar and did his MBA from Bangalore, later pivoting to a lab technician course in Kerala.

► Contd on | Nation

18 airports shut for now

PTI
NEW DELHI/ MUMBAI

More than 200 flights have been cancelled and at least 18 airports, including Srinagar, have been temporarily shut for operations amid restrictions in the wake of the armed forces launching missile attacks on terror targets in Pakistan on Wednesday morning.

Air India, IndiGo, SpiceJet, Air India Express, Akasa Air, and a few foreign airlines have cancelled their services to and from various airports. Sources said that at least 18 airports in the northern and western parts of the country have been temporarily shut. These airports include Srinagar, Leh, Jammu, Amritsar, Pathankot, Chandigarh, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Gwalior, Shimla, Dharamshala, Bhuj, Jamnagar, Hindon, Nanded, Adampur, they added.

According to one of the sources, more than 200 flights to and from various airports have been cancelled by airlines.

The affected passengers can opt for a full refund or an alternate flight as per availability. At least 35 flights to and from the Delhi airport have been cancelled.

India tells the world of 'measured action'

Agencies
NEW DELHI

Senior Indian officials held conversations with their counterparts in key countries to apprise them of Op Sindoor.

External Affairs minister S Jaishankar spoke to his counterparts from Japan, Germany, France and Spain. "Had a telecon with FM Takeshi Iwaya of Japan. Appreciate the strong condemnation of the April 22 terrorist attack. Discussed India's action against the cross-border terrorist infrastructure this morning," he said on X.

Jaishankar said he had a joint call with French foreign minister Jean-Noel Barrot and Germany's Johann Wadepuhl. "Appreciated their solidarity and support in the wake of the Pahalgalam terrorist attack. Discussed ensuring zero tolerance for terrorism," he said.

On his talks with Spanish foreign minister Jose Manuel Albares, Jaishankar said: "Discussed India's firm and measured response to cross-border terrorism."

He spoke to Qatar's PM and foreign minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, over phone, discussing India's stance in the fight against cross-border terrorism. NSA Ajit Doval also told his



counterparts in countries India has no intent to escalate tensions but is prepared to "retaliate resolutely" if Pakistan does so, officials said.

"NSA briefed his counterparts on actions taken and method of execution, which was measured, non-escalatory and restrained," an official said.

He spoke to US NSA and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, UK's Jonathan Powell, Saudi Arabia's Musaid Al Aiban, UAE's Sheikh Tahnoon, and Japan's Masataka Okano.

Contact was established with Russian NSA Sergei Shoigu, member of Political Bureau of CPC central committee and minister of foreign affairs of PRC, Wang Yi.

Meanwhile, Indian Army's 16 Corps said its jawan, L/Nk Dinesh Kumar of 5 Fd Regt, was killed in Pakistan's cross-border shelling along the LoC in J&K. Earlier, 15 Indians were killed and 43 hurt in Pak shelling in the Poonch and Tangdhar regions.

PM in business as usual messaging

Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar
NEW DELHI

It was a long night and day for Prime Minister Narendra Modi as after attending a media event on Tuesday evening, he monitored the conduct of Operation Sindoor early on Wednesday morning and then held a number of meetings to both review the operation and sent across a message of it being "business as usual" for

After reviewing Operation Sindoor, Prime Minister Modi takes a number of non-military decisions in Cabinet meetings

India as a number of non-strategic decisions were taken in a Cabinet meeting.

Later in the morning Modi first met Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval who briefed him about the strikes as also how the

armed forces were prepared for any kind of response to them from Pakistan. The situation in Jammu and Kashmir, where Pakistan had retaliated by shelling, resulting in loss of lives and

► Contd on | Nation

PM cancels trip to Europe

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called off his scheduled three-nation Europe tour in the wake of heightened tensions with Pakistan, sources confirmed on Wednesday. PM Modi was scheduled to travel to Croatia, Norway and the Netherlands starting May 13 and also participate in the 3rd India-Nordic Summit in Oslo on May 15-16. Last month, PM Modi had cut short his Saudi Arabia visit and returned home immediately after the Pahalgalam attack. PM also decided not to travel to Moscow to attend the Victory Day celebrations of Russia. —IANS



Narendra Gupta

RELIEF AND SATISFACTION | Loved ones hail government’s decision to attack Pakistani targets and say terrorism must be destroyed

Families of Dombivli victims: They can now rest in peace

NK Gupta
THANE

The family members of three individuals from Dombivli who were killed in Pahalgam – Atul Mone, Sanjay Lele and Hemant Joshi – on Wednesday expressed relief over the destruction of Pakistani terrorist hideouts. “I received a message from my friend on Wednesday 2.30am about a strike in Pakistan,” said Harshal Lele, son of Sanjay Lele. “My father and two uncles were among the 26 people killed in the Pahalgam attack. They can now rest in peace.” “There shouldn’t be just one attack. We must continue to eliminate terrorists. I agree with the Indian government’s press release, which stated that this is just the beginning. A total of nine missiles were launched, and all terrorist assets should be destroyed. Pakistan won’t change, and such operations must continue. Even after we retaliated twice, they dared to strike again – this time targeting tourists and killing mostly Hindus.”



Anushka Mone (above, right), the wife of Atul Mone, expressed satisfaction with the Indian Army’s response. “After the strike in Pakistan, I felt a sense of peace and satisfaction. Those who died in Pahalgam would have now rest in peace.” “I trusted Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government. Operation Sindoor has been launched, and it is just the beginning of our revenge. The terror routes must be eliminated. I support the nation wholeheartedly,” she said. Reflecting on her loss, she added, “Atul will never return to us, but our family has found peace through this action. It’s a good step.” Rucha Mone (above, left), the daughter of Atul Mone, said she felt relieved upon hearing about the attack. “I’m

happy that India has taken action. Operation Sindoor is a success. It has just begun, and I hope it continues until we eliminate terrorism.” Jayant Bhawe, the father-in-law of Hemant Joshi, stated, “The Indian government has taken the right step. I’ve been waiting for such a response. This operation is a true tribute to the three people we lost. The terrorists responsible must be punished. This mission will certainly help reduce terrorism.” In response to the strike, a group of women took to the streets holding ‘sindoor’ and placards reading ‘Operation Sindoor Successful’, ‘Pahalgam Halla Ka Badla’, along with a photo of Modi. They chanted slogans like, “Sun le bachcha Pakistan, tera baap Hindustan.”

Muslim groups: Justice is served

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

Justice is served: This was the overwhelming emotion as Muslim groups reacted to India’s ‘Operation Sindoor’ on Wednesday. The groups took the lead in

announcing their support for the government. Social media groups drew attention to the fact that Colonel Sophia Qureshi from Gujarat was one of two women officers who briefed the media in New Delhi about the night strikes on the terror camps.



Raza Academy members celebrating Operation Sindoor by distributing sweets –Salman Ansari

●● We congratulate our armed forces for launching this campaign against terrorists and enemies of the nation. It is also clear that we are not fighting any country, but targeting terrorism. We have always stood and will continue to stand against terrorism. We stand shoulder to shoulder with our forces and fully support any decision made by our government and military — **Saeed Noori**
Raza Academy president

●● Jamaat-e-Islami Hind considers terrorism a serious threat and a heinous crime against humanity, and deems its complete eradication essential for the safety, security, and peace of the country and its people — **Syed Sadatullah Hussaini**, President of Jamaat-E-Islami Hind

●● Pakistan deserves it. If we continue this offensive for some days, Pakistan will stop its terror operations in India. What happened in Pahalgam was shameful; the terrorists killed people after asking them their religion — **Yusuf Abrahani**
Former MLA and Samajwadi Party leader

●● The Board fully supports the initiative taken by the Prime Minister [Narendra Modi] and the Indian armed forces in retaliating against Pakistan. Innocent civilians were killed, and this resulted in rage among the masses. This will be addressed by the strikes in Pakistan and the Pakistan-occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir — **Mansoor Khan**
President, Shia Islamic Board

Court refuses bail to IM operative

Charul Shah Joshi
MUMBAI

A special sessions court has refused to grant bail to Afzal Usmani, alleged to be a key accused in the 2008 Gujarat blasts and an Indian Mujahideen (IM) operative, noting that he has already been awarded capital punishment by a court in connection with the 2008 Ahmedabad serial blast case. While rejecting his bail plea, the court stated, “The plea of innocence of the accused is not acceptable. The offences alleged against the accused and the co-accused in this case relate to national security. Their impact on the nation and society is quite significant.” Usmani had approached the special court from Ahmedabad Central Prison, where he has been behind bars for 15 years, seeking bail. The prosecution objected to his plea, stating that Usmani had committed serious offences involving the use of four stolen cars for planting and detonating bombs in Ahmedabad and Surat. The applicant/accused himself had stolen the cars for that purpose and supplied them to his co-accused. He is an active associate of the Students Islamic Movement of India. It is claimed that after the blasts, several emails were sent to multiple locations, taking responsibility for the attacks. A separate case was also registered by the Mumbai Police in connection with the IM conspiracy, in which Usmani was booked. Usmani, however, pleaded innocence, arguing that he was being subjected to double jeopardy. However, the court disagreed and rejected his bail plea.

WR implements new security measures

Western Railway (WR) authorities have implemented a sweeping set of security measures across the Mumbai Central Division, covering both long-distance and suburban stations.



Kamal Mishra

WR has deployed Armed Quick Response Teams at key stations, enabling swift intervention in case of emergencies. Additionally, joint flag marches by the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP) are being conducted to bolster public confidence and deter criminal activity.

SCREENING PROTOCOLS
Door frame metal detectors
Handheld metal detectors
Luggage scanners
Dog squads



SURVEILLANCE UPGRADE
3,000 high-resolution 4K CCTV cameras with night vision in suburban section



Of these, 1,000 cameras are equipped with facial recognition technology

ON GROUND SAFETY
Ramped up train escorting services

Increased patrolling in vulnerable zones

HELPLINES
139
Railways
1512 GRP



Text: Kamal Mishra

Passengers are encouraged to remain vigilant and immediately report any suspicious activity or unattended items. Awareness campaigns and frequent public announcements are being conducted to familiarise commuters with safety protocols.



Authorities assess nuclear, chemical contamination risk



Mumbai: Sirens blared, people scrambled for safety, and emergency responders rushed into action as mock drills were conducted at multiple locations in state on Wednesday, simulating air strikes and assessing chemical or nuclear “contamination” post an “attack”. An official said the overall response time was about three minutes, but a detailed analysis is being done. A blackout was conducted at 8pm in Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) residential complex in Anushakti Nagar. However, a similar blackout, scheduled at Tarapur in Palghar district, was cancelled. “After a siren was blared, residents of the BARC resi-

dential complex were asked to come out of their quarters as part of the drill. They were sensitised about the precautions to be taken during the emergency situation,” an official said on Wednesday night. He said BARC officials, police, and personnel of various security agencies participated in the drill. A blackout was conducted at two places in Mumbai during the drills, the official said. Away from Mumbai, drills were also held at Nutan High School in Kalyan, Gangapur Road in Nashik, Council Hall in Pune, Panchayat office at Uran, Tehsil office at Sindhudurg and Ratnagiri, and Tarapur in Maharashtra.

Closure of airports hits city travellers

MUMBAI: The escalation of tensions between India and Pakistan has caused worries to thousands of air travellers. Customer support centres of airlines are flooding with distress calls from those who have booked their flights on cancelled routes. This also includes flights connecting Mumbai Airport with the airports shut till May 10. Several tourists from Mumbai are stuck at these closed airports. Mumbai-based Umesh Bhoir went to Malani with his wife and 10-year-old son but the family is now stuck as their return flight was from Chandigarh. “Since the airline told me that I was eligible for a free refund, I cancelled our tickets and booked new tickets from Delhi. However, we are in Kasol now and there are no transportation options available to travel to Delhi. We will now possibly take a train from Ambala to Mumbai.” Travellers also took to social media to express their worries and ask about their flights’ status. Pruthvi Pokar, an X user, wrote to Air India saying, “My flight from Bhuj to Mumbai on 9th May was cancelled by your airline. Confirm immediately whether the 10th May flight at 8:55 AM is operating. I would appreciate help with rescheduling.”

–FPJ News Service

‘I got emotional after seeing mission name’

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

Pragati Jagdale, wife of Santosh Jagdale, who was killed in the April 22 Pahalgam attack, said on Wednesday that she was emotional after learning the name of Operation Sindoor. “I express my gratitude for naming the operation ‘Sindoor’. Terrorists erased the sindoor of the women. I got very emotional after reading the name. I can’t speak much,” Jagdale said at her residence here. Asavari Jagdale, her daughter, appreciated the efforts taken by the government and the Indian armed forces to avenge the loss of innocent lives. She also said that India had paid homage and served jus-


tice to the victims of the Pahalgam terrorist attack by initiating Operation Sindoor. “We got calls from our relatives [about Operation Sindoor]. India has avenged the Pahalgam attack through these air strikes. I was extremely emotional after hearing the name [Sindoor] of the mission. When Home Minister Amit Shah came to Srinagar to pay homage to those who were given ‘veer maran’, the sisters who lost their husbands were pleading. I think that is why the operation was called ‘Sindoor,’” Asavari said. “The loss of husbands and fathers was not in vain. India has paid actual homage to them (victims) by striking. I want to thank for the justice served within 15 days,” she added.

Special prayers at Siddhivinayak Temple



Mumbai: Siddhivinayak Temple will hold prayers on Thursday morning to thank the Lord for the success of Operation Sindoor. The temple administration said that in light of the successful missile strikes conducted by the Indian armed forces, a special puja and aarti will be held at the temple on May 8 from 8.30am to 9.0 am. “It was a good step by the government, so the temple trust decided to hold special prayers for blessings from the Lord,” said Veena More Patil, chief executive officer of the temple trust.

–FPJ News Service



Financing Infrastructure Beyond Housing

32.46%
REVENUE FROM OPERATIONS UP BY

27.98%
PROFIT AFTER TAX UP BY

122.59%
DISBURSEMENTS UP BY

55.31%
SANCTIONS UP BY

EXTRACT OF STATEMENT OF AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS (STANDALONE & CONSOLIDATED) FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 ST MARCH, 2025 (₹ in crore)						
Sl. No.	PARTICULARS	STANDALONE		CONSOLIDATED		
		QUARTER ENDED	YEAR ENDED	QUARTER ENDED	YEAR ENDED	
		31/03/25 (AUDITED)	31/03/24 (AUDITED)	31/03/25 (AUDITED)	31/03/24 (AUDITED)	31/03/25 (AUDITED)
1	Total Income from Operations (Net)	2,844.99	2,065.22	10,311.29	7,784.29	10,311.29
2	Net Profit for the Period (before tax & exceptional items)	1,020.26	943.12	3,636.66	2,843.44	3,636.66
3	Net Profit for the Period before tax (after exceptional items)	1,020.26	943.12	3,636.66	2,843.44	3,636.66
4	Net Profit for the Period after tax (after exceptional items)	727.74	700.16	2,709.14	2,116.74	2,709.14
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (comprising Profit for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive income (after tax))	627.38	713.63	2,544.34	2,136.52	2,544.34
6	Paid up Equity Share Capital (FV – ₹10/- each)	2,001.90	2,001.90	2,001.90	2,001.90	2,001.90
7	Other Equity (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	N.A.	N.A.	15,967.89	14,612.40	15,966.15
8	Securities Premium Account	N.A.	N.A.	1.26	1.26	1.26
9	Net Worth	N.A.	N.A.	17,969.79	16,614.30	17,968.05
10	Paid up Debt Capital/ Outstanding Debt*	-	-	1,07,280.61	74,032.22	1,07,280.61
11	Debt Equity Ratio	N.A.	N.A.	5.72	4.05	5.72
12	Earning Per Share (FV – ₹10/- each) (The EPS for quarters are not annualised)					
	i) Basic	3.64	3.50	13.53	10.57	13.53
	ii) Diluted	3.64	3.50	13.53	10.57	13.53
13	Debt Redemption Reserve**(as at year end)	N.A.	N.A.	2,965.69	2,726.11	2,965.69

*Outstanding Debt excluding Ind As Adjustments **Debt Redemption Reserve as on 31st March 2025 and 31st March 2024 respectively.

NOTES:

1. The above financial results of the company have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and subsequently approved by the Board of Directors in their meeting held on 07th May, 2025. These financial results have also been Audited by the Statutory Auditors of the Company.

2. The Board of the Company recommended a Final Dividend @ ₹1.05 per share of ₹10 each subject to approval in the AGM. The Company also paid Interim Dividend-I @ ₹2.05 and Interim Dividend-II @ ₹1.05 per share respectively. Thus, total dividend for FY 2024-25 is ₹30.79 Crore i.e 41.50% of the Face Value of the shares.





3. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly/ Yearly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 and 52(4) of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirement) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the financial results is available on the websites of BSE Limited (URL: www.bseindia.com/corporates), National Stock Exchange of India Limited (URL: www.nseindia.com/corporates) and the same is also available on the company's website (URL: www.hudco.org.in).


4. The other line items referred in regulation 52(4) of the Listing Regulation, pertinent disclosures have been made to the websites of BSE Limited (URL: www.bseindia.com/corporates), National Stock Exchange of India Limited (URL: www.nseindia.com/corporates) and the same is also available on the company's website (URL: www.hudco.org.in).

5. There is no change in the accounting policy during the quarter/ year ended period, hence there is no impact on net profit/loss, total comprehensive income or any other relevant financial item(s) due to change(s) in accounting policies.


For and on behalf of the Board of Directors
Sd/-
Sanjay Kulkreshtha
Chairman & Managing Director


Place: Mumbai
Date: 07.05.2025


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IPC vs BNS: Crime law exam mix-up across 53 centres

Vikrant Jha

MUMBAI

A massive administrative blunder by the University of Mumbai (MU) disrupted the 'Law of Crimes' exam on Wednesday, affecting hundreds of students across all 53 exam centres. The MU later issued a brief statement confirming the error.

The confusion stemmed from a failure to differentiate between students appearing for the Allowed to Keep Terms (ATKT) exam under the old syllabus and regular students under the revised curriculum. As a result, question papers based on the newly introduced Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, were distributed to all candidates, including those who were to be tested under the old outdated Indian Penal Code (IPC).

The exam was scheduled from 10.30am to 1pm, but the invigilators came rushing in an hour later, saying there had been a mistake, a student from three-year LLB programme said. "They took back the papers and said we would be given a new set. We lost nearly an hour and had to start all over again," the student said.

Despite the university replacing the question papers mid-exam, reports surfaced that some colleges continued to direct even the regular students, those under the BNS syllabus, to write answers based on the newly arrived IPC paper, citing university instructions.

"In our college, after the replacement papers arrived, the staff told us to write the IPC paper which came just for the ATKT students. They insisted that this was the only version sent by the university, even though we were taught the BNS-based syllabus," said

IN BRIEF

- 1 Students appearing for ATKT exam under the old syllabus were to take the IPC exam
- 2 Regular students were to take the BNS exam under the revised curriculum
- 3 Exam scheduled from 10.30am to 1pm, but the invigilators came rushing an hour later, saying there had been a mistake (with BNS exam circulated to all)
- 4 Students lost nearly an hour; many others told to continue with BNS exam

another student.

Student organisations and senate members slammed the incident, calling it a systemic failure. "The university's examination department has become synonymous with disorganisation. When a mix-up of this scale happens at all 53 centres, it's no longer a mistake; it's negligence," said Pradeep Sawant, a Yuva Sena senate member.

This chaos unfolded amid already existing confusion over exam schedules. Two separate timetables were released; one for first year LLB (3 years) semester II students and another for BA LLB (5 years) semester VI students. The revised timetable for the three-year programme was released only on April 28, while the five-year course had its schedule published a month earlier on March 29. Students and colleges received conflicting interpretations, which added to the anxiety.

One too many: Admissions at 229 colleges suspended over lapses

Vikrant Jha

MUMBAI

The University of Mumbai (MU), on Wednesday, announced the suspension of the first-year undergraduate admission process for 229 affiliated colleges for 2025-26, citing non-compliance with mandatory accreditation and governance norms.

The university said that these colleges had failed to secure or renew accreditation from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) or the National Board of Accreditation (NBA), and had not established the mandatory College Development Committee (CDC) as required under the Maharashtra Public Universities Act, 2016.

The university added that a fine of Rs10,000 has also been levied on these institutions, further noting that the decision was approved by the Management Council after serious deliberation.

Section 97 of the Maharashtra Public Universities Act mandates that every affiliated, autonomous, empowered college and recognised institution must constitute a CDC. Similarly, under Section 110(4) of the Act, every affiliated college is required to ensure accreditation or reaccreditation by NAAC or NBA. The suspension is being seen as one of the most significant regulatory actions by MU in recent years, with implications for thousands of prospective students.

229 Total non-compliant colleges

156 Failed to meet NAAC/NBA requirements

73 Did not set up the CDC

LAST DITCH EFFORTS | BMC scrambling to meet May 31 deadline for road concreting works; 83.36% still remaining; AMC Abhijit Bangar says, in exceptional cases, civic body will ensure junction-to-junction completion

City is a literal ditch as BMC limps to meet May 31 deadline

Devashri Bhujbal

MUMBAI

As much as 83.36% of the cement concreting work of Mumbai's roads remains to be completed, with heavy rain-fall reminding the BMC of its May 31 deadline. The Rs17,700 crore mega project has made a mess of the metropolis, with contractors violating every single rule.

There are widespread complaints of shoddy work. In some cases, perfectly good roads and pavements are being done much to the anger of local citizens. In Bandra, citizens came together to stop the digging of a good road. Former corporators like Asif Zakaria and Sheetal Mhatre have alleged massive corruption in the project.

The BMC has undertaken cement concretisation of a total of 2,121 roads, including phases 1 and 2, stretching to a total length of 700km. As per the data accessed by the FPJ, as of May 5, the concretisation of 353 roads is completed and work is in progress on 1,768 roads.

Although the BMC reiterates that it will try to complete as much work as possible by May 31, citizens are sceptical of the quality of work. In a recent inspection carried out by additional municipal commissioner (AMC, Projects) Abhijit Bangar, substandard dry concrete mix was found at a road work site, after which a fine of Rs75,000 was imposed on the contractor, and a BMC sub-engineer was suspended too.

When asked if BMC will be able to meet its deadline, Bangar said, "Our effort is to complete all ongoing works till May 31. In exceptional cases where road work is not getting completed, we will ensure junction-to-junction



1st Pasta Lane



Kamlabai Kanya Shala Marg, Charni Road



Gamdevi Road



Krantiveer Rajguru Marg, Girgaum

completion of the road."

"It is alarming that only 16% of the road concretisation work has been completed, even as we approach the second week of May. In the K East Ward, 19 projects are being handled under the supervision of a single junior engineer from the maintenance department. This clearly points to inadequate staffing for effective monitoring of the works. Moreover, it reflects a serious lapse in oversight by senior BMC officials," said Godfrey Pimenta, trustee of Watchdog Foundation.

"Completing a road also includes pavements and road-side drains. We have to think of pedestrians and not only for the motorists to make the roads motorable before monsoon," activist Debi Goenka said.

"Every second road in the

₹17,700 crore PROJECT COST
2,121 Roads
353 Completed
1,768 In progress
Phase 1
Total 700 roads (321 km)
Completed 278 (76 km)
In Progress 422 (136 km)
Completed 39.71%
In Progress 60.29%
Phase 2
Total 1412 (379 km)
Completed 75 (10 km)
In Progress 1346 (286 km)
Completed 5.31%
In Progress 95.33%

city is dug up. We can't recognise our own city. It is visible that all work won't be completed by May 31," activist Anil Galgali, a resident of Kurla, said. "What was the hurry to start work on over 2,000 roads at a time? Instead of two phases, concretisation could have been undertaken in four phases. Now, with less than a month left to make all roads motorable, the quality cannot be ensured," Galgali said.

However, AMC Bangar said that there will be no compromise in the quality of work. "Apart from a quality monitoring agency and BMC engineers who regularly inspect the site, we have a third party appointed, IIT Bombay, to ensure the quality of the concretisation work carried out. Additionally, senior officials also carry out surprise inspections. Any sub-

standard work is not tolerated."

Bangar also said that Mumbaikars are already suffering from extensive road works and if any road is left half-done, it will create more problems during the monsoon. "We have told contractors not to commence any new road work," Bangar said, adding that remaining work will be carried post-monsoon.

However, another senior BMC officer said that out of the remaining 83% of the road works, 50% will be completed before the monsoon. "For the incomplete road concretisation, work will be stopped from May 31 at the then existing length. The remaining work will be carried forward in the next season. To make the roads motorable, patch works will be undertaken," he said.



plastic life

Ferry passengers oblivious of garbage floating in sea at the Gateway of India jetty – Salman Ansari

Safety turn for 15 fatal spots on old Mum-Pune h'way

Sweetie Bhagwat

MUMBAI

Fifteen fatality-prone locations along the old Mumbai-Pune Highway (NH-48) have undergone significant safety upgrades through a collaborative effort led by SaveLIFE Foundation, in partnership with the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) Limited, the highway police, and the Highways Infrastructure Trust. This stretch of highway recorded 88 deaths last year.

SaveLIFE said the initiative is aimed at addressing the root causes of road crashes by focusing on road engineering, law enforcement, and emergency response.

The project began with a comprehensive road safety assessment using field surveys and data analysis to identify high-risk zones. Based on these findings, specific road engineering solutions – referred to as safety treatments – were introduced (see box).

Dr Zafar Khan, the executive director and Joint CEO of

MEASURES

- Clearer signage
- Speed-calming features
- Enhanced pedestrian infra
- Improved visibility
- Redesigned intersections to reduce collisions

Highways Infrastructure Trust, said that the state recorded over 15,000 road crash fatalities last year, majority of them on highways. The trust, with SaveLIFE, is introducing speed-calming measures, improving pedestrian crossing visibility, and reinforcing lane discipline, with an aim to reduce fatalities on the corridor by 20-30% over the coming years.

In addition to infrastructure changes, enforcement strategies have also been put in place to promote better compliance with traffic rules and encourage safer driving behaviour.

600 B'deshis detained in 4 months

MUMBAI: A total of 600 Bangladeshis were detained from January to April with 350 cases registered, Joint Commissioner of Police (law and order) Satyanarayan Chaudhary said. These illegal immigrants will be deported back to their home country immediately without registering criminal cases, sources said. In Mumbai alone, over 150 illegal Bangladeshi immigrants have been detained in the past four days. The process of deporting them has also been initiated. Since 2024, the state and Mumbai police have intensified their operations against illegal settlers. The crackdown grew more rigorous in 2025, with January to March witnessing the highest number of actions.

3 killed by speeding bus

Three people were killed and two vehicles, including a police jeep and a scooter, were left severely damaged after a speeding passenger bus drove through a crowded market near the district hospital in Mangon around 4pm on Tuesday. The CCTV footage from the area confirmed the bus driver's offence.

33 yrs on, Taj Hotel key theft case closes

Pranali Lotlikar

MUMBAI

The Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) of the Esplanade court has disposed of a theft case registered by the Taj Mahal Hotel in 1991 against a 22-year-old IIT Powai student. Acquitting the man of the alleged theft charges, the court held that since the police have not been able to trace the accused, complainant or any witnesses in the case, there is no point in keeping the matter pending for 33 years and 10 months.

The court said, "The matter is so old that there is no possibility of the accused or the witnesses appearing before the court or even before the police. Hence, abiding by the High Court's directions, such cases need to be addressed and disposed of promptly."

The prosecution's case dates back to July 5, 1991,

when a case was filed against Lalit Narayan, who resided at the IIT hostel. The complainant in the case, Veliya Gurucharan Singh, a security guard at the hotel, stated he was on duty when the hotel manager informed him that Lalit had allegedly stolen a key from the reception and used it to stay at the hotel. The alleged theft came to light when Lalit returned the key to the disco manager, who recognised it as belonging to a room that had been locked for renovation.

When the hotel manager and the security guard questioned Lalit about how he obtained the key to the locked room, he allegedly failed to provide a satisfactory explanation. Consequently, a case was registered against him under section 380 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). The case was subsequently registered at the Colaba police station.

Bank in big controversy over ₹7.25 cr deal for ex-CEA's book

Somendra Sharma

MUMBAI

Following reports that Union Bank of India spent an estimated Rs7.25 crore to buy nearly 200,000 copies of a book authored by former Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) Krishnamurthy V Subramanian, the bank, in its communication to the stock exchange, has acknowledged "certain lapses in the procurement". The book is titled 'India@100: Envisioning Tomorrow's Economic Powerhouse'.

However, the bank stated in the communication that the information reported "does not have any material impact on its operations or financials at this stage". The bank's general manager has also been suspended. The government has also recalled Subramanian from the IMF six months prior to the expiry

of his tenure with the world body. Meanwhile, a query by the FPJ to the corporate communications department of the bank did not elicit any response.

As per the bank's communication, the bank is examining the "lapses in the procurement". It clarified that the subject matter does not fall under the criteria prescribed

BY THE BOOK?

for material events as per Regulation 30 of SEBI (LODR) Regulations, 2015. "There is no such information which is not disclosed by the bank and has an impact on the movement of the trading of the bank's securities. Therefore, disclosure under Regulation 30 is not warranted, and at present there are no regulatory / legal proceedings arising on account of this matter. The said article does not have any

material impact on the bank," the bank informed the stock exchange.

Media reports had claimed that such a large number of copies was reportedly purchased by the bank to distribute among "customers/ local schools/ colleges/ libraries, etc". The reports said that the bank's central office ordered 189,450 paperback and 10,422 hardcover copies of the book priced at Rs350 and Rs597, respectively.

Meanwhile, the bank's MD and CEO, A Manimekhalai, will complete her three-year term at the bank on June 30, and she is eligible for an extension as she would superannuate only in March 2026. However, there are reports that in April Manimekhalai wrote to the central government stating that she does not want an extension despite clearances from the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC).

Bomb threat note found in flight

Poonam Apraj & Dhairya Gajara

MUMBAI

A serious security scare unfolded at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) after a note was found inside an incoming IndiGo flight from Chandigarh, threatening to blow up the aircraft. Upon receiving the threat, the Sahar police registered an offence and launched an investigation into the matter.

IndiGo's 6E 6382 departed from Chandigarh at 12.51pm on Tuesday. It received the bomb threat while it was airborne to Mumbai. According to Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone-8) Manish Kalwaniya, a note was found inside the toilet of the plane.

The note was found in the toilet of the aircraft by the crew, who immediately informed the Air Traffic Control

source related to the airport revealed that the information about the threat was provided to the Air Traffic Control (ATC) by the airline's crew on board.

As soon as the aircraft landed at CSMIA at 3.01pm, it was moved to an isolation bay and all the passengers were safely deboarded according to the standard security protocol. A thorough search was conducted by the police and security agencies, but no suspicious item was found.

The police have registered an FIR against an unknown individual and launched an investigation into the matter. Efforts are underway to trace the perpetrator, though no breakthrough has been reported yet.

The incident prompted a swift response from aviation and security officials, and all standard operating procedures (SOPs) were strictly followed to ensure the safety of passengers and crew, officials said.

"We deeply appreciate the patience, understanding, and cooperation of our customers. The safety of our customers is our highest priority, and we remain dedicated to ensuring a secure and smooth travel experience for all," said the airline.

Second chance for man who slashed GF's face

Charul Shah Joshi

MUMBAI

The sessions court has convicted a 35-year-old Borivali resident for assaulting a woman he was allegedly in love with after she started distancing herself from him in September 2013. However, the court released the man, Mayur Bhatwala, on probation, stating that his actions were driven by the "passion of love" for the woman.

The court observed that Bhatwala was 24 years old when the incident occurred. "It seems he is the sole breadwinner of the family. The circumstances under which the offence was committed need to be considered. The court's approach in sentencing such

offenders should always be reformative," the court said.

The duo met through a social networking site and became friends. She was working at a beauty parlour and he visited her frequently. He proposed marriage, but the parlour's owner advised her against a relationship with him as he was unemployed.

On September 10, 2013, the accused appeared outside the beauty parlour, attempting to meet her. As she refused, he began banging on the door. Frightened, she asked the owner for help and instructed the watchman not to open the door. He returned the next day and threatened suicide, issuing further threats later and attacking her with a blade, injuring her face.

Woman strangles BF bizman in Malad hotel; arrested from Gujarat

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

The Dindoshi police have arrested a woman from Gujarat for allegedly killing a 47-year-old man, who was also her relative, with whom she reportedly had an extra-marital affair. The victim, Imamuddin Mansuri, an interior decorator, was found

dead in a Malad hotel on May 4. The accused, Barkat Rathod, was arrested days later from Surat after trying to mislead the police by making the murder appear as a suicide. Rathod is the wife of Mansuri's brother-in-law and their family had reportedly come to know about their affair, after which her hus-

band severed ties with her. The two had checked in at the Shalimar hotel near the Malad station and Rathod is said to have strangled Mansuri during an argument. Later, she apparently sent a message from his phone to the family's WhatsApp group, which read that Mansuri was ending his life due to stress. Alarmed by the message,

Mansuri's son, sought help from the police, who swiftly traced the victim to the hotel. He was found unconscious and taken to a hospital where he was declared dead. However, a postmortem revealed neck injuries. Using mobile tracking, the police nabbed Rathod, who reportedly confessed to the crime.

Pre-monsoon rains drench city, MMR; IMD continues yellow alert



1) Inundated JJ flyover
2) Crane crashes at incomplete Byculla bldg
3) Tree collapses in Tata Garden, Breach Candy
4) Strong winds rip off scaffolding near JJ Hosp
5) Tree falls in Byculla

Pics: Salman Ansari

Devashri Bhujbal
MUMBAI

For the second consecutive day, Mumbai and its metropolitan areas were lashed by pre-monsoon rains accompanied with lightning on Wednesday. As per the weather department, the showers are likely to continue for the next two to three days.

Although the rains have brought respite from heat, thunderstorms coupled with gusty winds led to the collapse of over 100 tree branches and also impacted local train services. Bhandup, Powai, LBS Road, BKC, Aarey Colony, Versova, Masjid and Nariman Point received the highest rainfall.

A yellow alert, warning of rainfall with thunderstorms today, was in place for the districts of Mumbai, Thane, Palghar and Raigad. There is a possibility of moderate to heavy rainfall in the suburbs. As per the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Mumbai city and suburbs will witness cloudy skies accompanied with thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds with speed reaching 50-60 kmph at isolated places today.

On Wednesday afternoon, IMD issued alerts for Mumbai, Thane and Palghar, warning of moderate rains, thunderstorms and gusty winds with speed reaching 50-60 kmph. Mumbai suburbs received more rainfall than the city area. As per the IMD, by 5.30pm, Santacruz recorded 21.2 mm rainfall and

IN BRIEF

- 1 More than 100 tree branches collapsed; local train services impacted
- 2 Powai, BKC, Aarey Colony, Versova, Nariman Point received highest rainfall
- 3 Showers are likely to continue for next two to three days, says IMD

a maximum temperature of 33.8 degrees Celsius. Colaba saw 3 mm rainfall and a maximum temperature of 32.4 degrees. However, there will be not much relief from humidity, which is likely to increase as the western winds are pulling in moisture.

As per the BMC disaster management team, in a span of one hour from 4pm to 5 pm, when the thunderstorms were most intense, 13 tree branches collapsed. The pre-monsoon rains also disrupted the local train services on both the Central and Western lines during the evening peak hours. The Western Railway suburban services were affected after a tree branch fell on an Overhead Equipment. Slow trains were briefly halted, while other services were behind schedule due to the cascading effect.

Few mainline services were delayed on the Central Railway, while trains on the harbour line were running late too.

Three people, including two passengers and an auto driver, were killed after a large tree fell on their vehicle during heavy winds in Kalyan on Tuesday night

In a similar mishap on Wednesday, an auto driver was injured, while a passenger was killed after a tree collapsed on the three-wheeler in Thane city

Tonnes of removed silt goes down the drain

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

Hundreds of tonnes of silt removed from storm water drains by BMC contractors went back into the drains following heavy rains on Wednesday evening. With the regular monsoon not far away, there is a strong possibility of flooding.

City BJP vice-president Ravi Raja, who is a veteran ex-corporator, blamed the civic body for the situation. Talking

to FPJ on Wednesday, he said, "As per rule, the muck removed from the drains and nullahs is supposed to be carted away after 48 hours." However, in most places, huge muck piles have not been removed by the contractors because there is no BMC supervision, he pointed out. For several days, heaps of muck are not cleared causing great inconvenience to citizens, Raja added.

He further said, "In any case, the BMC had received an

alert about heavy rains from the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The civic administration should have gotten the contractors to take away the muck immediately." Many citizens in the past have suggested that the silt removed from the drains should be cleared immediately. However, the silt is often wet and hence it is left to dry for two days so that the weight of water does not get added to transport costs. Activist Anand Shirali said,

"A week ago, the IMD had alerted the BMC and other agencies about the possibility of thunder showers." What prevented the civic officials from ordering the immediate removal of piles of silt, which remained outside the drains for over 48 hours, asked Shirali.

Now, the question is whether the contractors will demand double payment for removing the silt, which has flowed back into the drains after the Wednesday rains.

Ajay Devgn leases out office space for 5 years at ₹3.3 crore

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

Actor Ajay Devgn has leased out a commercial office unit in Andheri West, securing a rental income of approx Rs3.3 crore over a five-year period, according to property data reviewed by Square Yards. The agreement includes a security deposit of Rs16.42 lakh, with stamp duty and registration fees totalling to Rs86,500.

The lease, registered recently, involves a monthly rent of Rs5.47 lakh for the first three years, increasing to

Rs6.29 lakh for the remaining two years. The property, spanning 2,545 sq ft of carpet area, is located in the premium commercial project 'Signature Lotus'. The tenant is Bombay Design Centre Private Limited. The leased unit is a part of a trio of adjacent spaces, which Devgn purchased in April 2023 for Rs30.35 crore (approx Rs10.12 crore per unit). Based on the lease terms and acquisition cost, the rental yield is estimated at 6.5% for the initial term and 7.5% for the latter period.

CSMIA to shut for 6 hrs today

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) will remain closed for six hours today (May 8) for annual pre-monsoon maintenance. Both the runways will remain non-operational from 11am to 5pm. The airport said that a 'notice to airmen' was issued six months in advance, enabling airlines to adjust their schedules well ahead of time. In its April 20 edition, FPJ had reported that the primary and secondary runways – 09/27 and 14/32, respectively – will be temporarily non-operational today. Specialists will inspect runway surfaces for wear and tear, addressing preventive measures for waterlogging to ensure safe landings and take-offs during the monsoon.

KEY RULING | Plan has administrative nods, says high court; locals have been vehemently opposing the multi-crore project

Project in public interest: HC refuses to stay SoBo jetty work

Urvi Mahajani
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday refused to stay ongoing construction work related to the proposed passenger jetty and terminal facilities near the Gateway of India, observing that "the project is in public interest".

The south Mumbai residents are vehemently opposing the multi-crore project, citing environmental and heritage concerns. They have also filed a public interest litigation (PIL) followed by an interim application. However, the court pointed out that the project has proceeded through due administrative approvals.

A division bench of Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice M S Karnik was hearing an interim application filed by the Clean and Heritage Colaba Residents Association (CHCRA), which alleged that the authorities had breached an earlier assurance by beginning piling work at the site despite promising

RESIDENTS SAY...

Process of fixing concrete piles into seabed involves heavy drilling and hammering

This can cause structural damage to sea wall and nearby heritage buildings

GOVERNMENT REBUTS...

Petitioners were aware that project entails piling work; raised no objection earlier

Their application is an afterthought and amounts to an abuse of the process

not to demolish the sea-facing wall until June 20.

The court, while refusing to interfere, clarified that the work will continue subject to the final outcome of the petition. "At this point, we are not inclined to stay the work," read the order. The HC will

hear CHCRA's PIL on June 16.

On May 2, the government had assured the court that the wall near the Gateway of India, marked for demolition to facilitate the project, will not be broken before June 20. However, the CHCRA, represented by Advocate Prerak Chaudhary, submitted that on May 3, piling equipment and material were brought back to the site.

The association argued that "the process of fixing concrete piles into the seabed involves heavy drilling and hammering, which can cause structural damage to the sea wall and nearby heritage buildings". During the hearing on Wednesday, CHCRA's counsel Aspi Chenoy submitted that once installed, the piles would be "nearly impossible to remove," effectively turning the project into a fait accompli before the matter is fully adjudicated.

Advocate General Birendra Saraf, appearing for the government, told the court that the process for awarding the project began in July 2024.

"Petitioners were always aware that the project entails piling work. They had, in fact, agreed that work could begin from the sea side and had raised no objection earlier," he argued.

The government submitted that the contract was awarded on October 3, 2024, and the work order was issued on October 11. "There has been no change in circumstances since the last order (May 2). The petitioners are now seeking to halt the piling, which is an essential part of the project," Saraf said. This application is an afterthought and amounts to an abuse of the process, he said, adding that the project is to be completed in 30 months and is of vital public importance.

Meanwhile, another PIL regarding the same project – filed by three residents from Colaba and Cuffe Parade, representing over 150 individuals and businesses – also came up for hearing. The bench questioned the maintainability of multiple petitions on the same matter.

IIT-B gives idea to curb manhole lid thefts

Shefali Parab -Pandit
MUMBAI

To curb the stealing of manhole cover, the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-B) has recommended the use of fibre reinforced polymer (FRP) grates, citing their dura-

bility and resistance to theft. The BMC has now directed officials to evaluate the feasibility of replacing iron covers with FRP grates.

During a recent inspection of Central Avenue Road in Santacruz West and Model Town Road in Andheri West,

the civic officials received complaints regarding such thefts. IIT-B experts, who were present during the visit, proposed the use of FRP grates.

Experts said, "FRP grates, which are manufactured to high specifications, offer

superior durability and a longer lifespan. Due to their heavier weight compared to iron grates, they remain in place even during heavy rain water flow." Additionally, their non-metallic composition makes them less attractive to thieves, they added.

BEST, GOOGLE MAPS JOIN FORCES FOR LIVE UPDATES

Aim To make travel across more commuter-friendly

Initiative launched on Wednesday in presence of CM Devendra Fadnavis, his deputy Eknath Shinde

Benefits

Live bus arrival times, routes and delays on Google Maps

Estimated arrival times will be in green or red, depending on traffic

Data will be updated in real-time through BEST's internal systems

Updates in Marathi, Hindi, English languages

BEST stats

2,700 32L pax Fleet Daily strength ridership

Text: Kamal Mishra

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STATEMENT OF CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2025

Sr. No.	PARTICULARS	For the quarter ended March 31, 2025	For the quarter ended March 31, 2024	For the year ended March 31, 2025	For the year ended March 31, 2024
		Audited	Audited	Audited	Audited
1	Total Revenue from Operations	83,261	69,180	3,10,763	2,58,682
2	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	31,591	25,861	1,17,326	95,959
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	31,591	25,861	1,17,326	95,959
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	24,484	20,176	91,183	74,964
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit/ (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	24,104	20,192	90,803	75,006
6	Paid up Equity Share Capital	43,138	39,476	43,138	39,476
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	5,94,091	4,05,499	5,94,091	4,05,499
8	Securities Premium Account	2,31,077	1,33,700	2,31,077	1,33,700
9	Net worth	6,37,223	4,44,969	6,37,223	4,44,969
10	Paid up Debt Capital/ Outstanding Debt	16,32,242	13,95,962	16,32,242	13,95,962
11	Outstanding Redeemable Preference Shares	NA	NA	NA	NA
12	Debt Equity Ratio	2.56	3.14	2.56	3.14
13	Earnings Per Share (not annualised for quarter ended periods)				
1	Basic:	5.68	5.11	21.43	18.99
2	Diluted:	5.55	4.89	20.85	18.35
14	Capital Redemption Reserve	NA	NA	NA	NA
15	Debt Redemption Reserve	531	16,910	531	16,910
16	Total Debts to Total Assets (%)	70.80%	73.64%	70.80%	73.64%
17	Net profit Margin (%)	29.36%	29.16%	29.33%	28.98%
18	GNPA (%)	1.08%	1.10%	1.08%	1.10%
19	NNPA (%)	0.71%	0.65%	0.71%	0.65%
20	Provision Coverage Ratio (%)	34.46%	41.27%	34.46%	41.27%
21	Capital Adequacy Ratio (CRAR) (%)	44.61%	38.46%	44.61%	38.46%

Notes:

- a) The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 and 52 of the Listing Regulations. The full format of the quarterly financial results are available on the websites of the Stock Exchanges www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com and the Aadhar Housing Finance Limited www.aadharhousing.com
- b) For the other line items referred in regulation 52 (4) of the Listing Regulations, pertinent disclosures have been made to the Stock Exchange BSE Limited and can be accessed on www.bseindia.com
- c) Debt service coverage ratio, Interest service coverage ratio, Current ratio, Long term debt to working capital ratio, Bad debts to account receivable ratio, Current liability ratio, Debtors turnover, Inventory turnover and Operating margin (%) are not applicable.
- d) Key standalone financial information :

Sr. No.	PARTICULARS	For the quarter ended March 31, 2025	For the quarter ended March 31, 2024	For the year ended March 31, 2025	For the year ended March 31, 2024
1	Total Revenue from Operations	83,252	69,171	3,10,735	2,58,659
2	Profit before tax & exceptional items	31,648	25,844	1,17,381	95,923
3	Profit before tax	31,648	25,844	1,17,381	95,923
4	Profit after tax	24,524	20,151	91,211	74,851

e) Previous period / year figures have been regrouped / re-classified wherever necessary in line with the financial results for the quarter and year ended March 31, 2025.

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors of
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₹37.64L aid to family of road mishap victim

Pranali Lotlikar
MUMBAI

The Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT), Thane, has awarded Rs37.64 lakh as compensation to the family of a 26-year-old man, who died in a road accident in 2019. The judgment was delivered by MACT Chairman and Principal District Judge SB Agrawal. The victim, Kunal Ganesh Godbole, a resident of Charai, Thane, lost his life on the night of March 24, 2019, after a container truck rammed into his scooter near the Khopat signal. He sustained fatal head injuries and died on the spot. The deceased was on his way to work at the time of the accident. His widow, mother, father, and minor sister had filed a claim petition under Section 166 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, seeking compensation from the truck's owner and its insurer, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company. The Tribunal found that the accident occurred due to the rash and negligent driving of the truck driver. It rejected the insurer's defence that there was any breach of policy conditions, ruling both the owner and insurer jointly and severally liable to pay compensation. The court said Rs10 lakh each will be kept in fixed deposits of the members.

Puppy thrown off society building, dies

Raina Assainar
NAVI MUMBAI

Panvel police have registered a case against an unidentified person for allegedly throwing a 6 to 7-month-old stray puppy from a building in the Marathon Nexzone residential complex at Palaspe, Panvel, leading to the puppy's death. The incident took place on Sunday evening and has sparked outrage among animal lovers and residents. According to the police, the puppy had been living on the premises of the upscale society along with other stray dogs and was often seen playing with children. Around 5.15pm on Sunday, an unidentified person reportedly threw the puppy from a considerable height within the society's premises. The puppy landed on the metal roofing of the generator room, causing a loud noise that alerted the security guards. On inspection, the guards found the puppy dead. "The complex consists of 31-storey towers with tight security and restricted access," said an official. "We are checking the CCTV footage to ascertain who would have done that," the officer added.

Illegal stay: 3 Bangladeshis held in Thane

NK Gupta
MUMBAI

The Bhiwandi City Police on Tuesday arrested three Bangladeshi nationals – including two women – for residing in Bhiwandi without valid visas and passports. The accused are Babli Daulat Shaikh, 40, and Rehana Rajjak Shaikh, 25, both residents of the Hanuman Tekdi, and Mohammad Ismail Husain alias Ismail Ansari, 45, a resident of the Bagalapura. During the investigation, it was found that they had entered India without valid documents, including a visa and passport. "They admitted to fleeing Bangladesh due to poverty and unemployment," said an official. Notably, a special drive is underway in Thane district to identify and apprehend Bangladeshi nationals who have been living illegally in areas including Bhiwandi, Thane, Ulhasnagar, and Kalyan. Police confirmed that the operation is ongoing, and efforts are being made to locate, arrest, and present such individuals in court.

DELAYED ACTION | Court was hearing a petition filed by a group of slum dwellers; group contended eligibility for rehabilitation with proper documents to prove their claim

‘Hear slum dwellers facing eviction from nat’l park’

Urvi Mahajani
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday directed the state government to grant a hearing to certain slum dwellers residing inside Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) who have been served eviction notices.

A bench of Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice MS Karnik was informed by the state that due process had been followed before issuing the notices and that eligible dwellers would be accommodated.

The court was hearing a petition filed by a group of slum dwellers who contended they were eligible for rehabilitation and had documents to prove it.

In January, the HC had pulled up the state for delaying action against illegal encroachments within SGNP. It had directed a survey to identify eligible encroachers and immediate removal of those not covered by the 2011 cut-off date for rehabilitation.

Following this, the government issued eviction notices



and launched a removal drive.

Advocate Ashok Saraogi, representing the petitioners, argued that the dwellers had been residing in SGNP since before the cut-off date but were served eviction notices without a hearing.

State advocate General Birendra Saraf said a survey had been conducted and assured the court that eligible dwellers would be rehabilitated.

"They (dwellers) want one more chance. Hear them. We will ask them to appear on a particular date when they will

show their documents," the bench told Saraf, directing the State to decide their eligibility as per law.

The HC asked the petitioners to appear before the appropriate authority on May 14 with relevant documents, and said it would pass a reasoned order thereafter.

Despite a 2003 judgment mandating relocation of slum dwellers whose names were on electoral rolls as of 1995, the state had unilaterally extended the cut-off to 2011.

In October 2024, the state told the court it would rehabili-

IN BRIEF

1 In January, HC pulled up the state for delaying action against illegal encroachments within SGNP

2 It directed a survey to identify eligible encroachers and immediate removal of those not covered by the 2011 cut-off date for rehabilitation

3 Following this, the government issued eviction notices and launched a removal drive

tate eligible slum dwellers on 90 acres of land carved out of 190 acres at Marol-Maroshi in the western suburbs. The move was opposed by the Conservation Action Trust, NGO Vanashakti, and activist Zoru Bathena, who pointed out that the plot falls within Aarey Colony, a Notified Forest and eco-sensitive zone where no development is permitted.

Panel submits report in illegal hoarding tragedy case

Prajakta Pol
MUMBAI

The high-level inquiry committee, headed by former Chief Justice Dilip Bhosale, on Wednesday submitted its report to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis regarding the illegal giant hoarding collapse in Ghatkopar on May 24, 2024. Along with its investigation findings, the commit-

tee has also suggested key measures to the government concerning the regulation of such oversized hoardings. The illegal hoarding collapsed in the Cheddannagar area and claimed the lives of 16 innocent people.

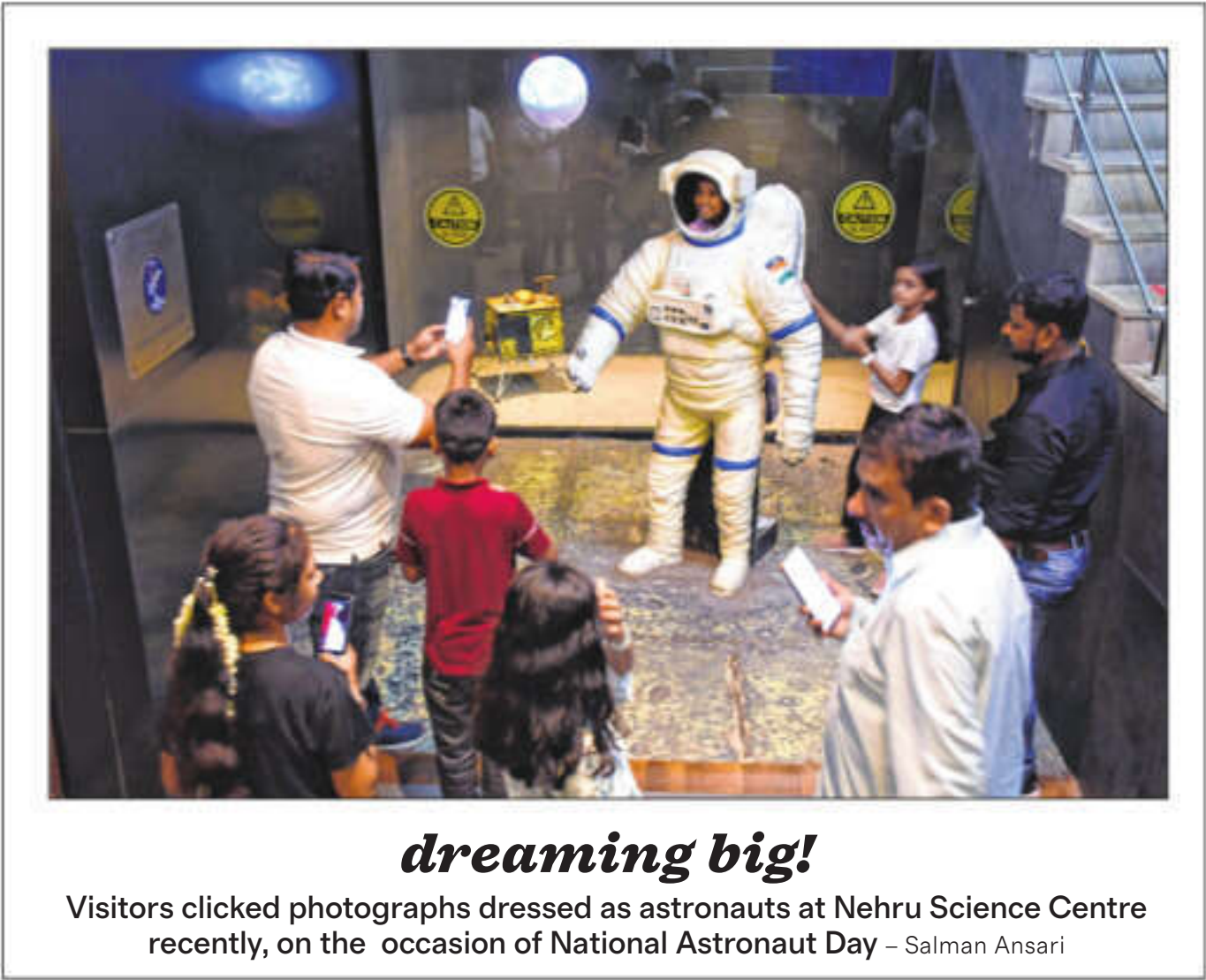
The incident raised serious questions about the legality and safety of advertising hoardings across the city. In response, the state govern-

ment formed an inquiry committee on June 10, 2024. The committee was initially given one month to submit its findings, with the final deadline extended to March 31, 2025.

The committee included the additional commissioner of BMC, an officer of the rank of additional director general of police, a structural engineer from IIT Bombay experi-

enced in evaluating external structural safety, an income tax officer with expertise in investigating financial irregularities and tax evasion, and a chartered accountant skilled in forensic audits.

The committee was tasked with examining the sequence of events, causes, and consequences of the hoarding collapse. It was also directed to make recommendations on



dreaming big!

Visitors clicked photographs dressed as astronauts at Nehru Science Centre recently, on the occasion of National Astronaut Day – Salman Ansari

Ticket counter for Panvel

FPJ News Service
NAVI MUMBAI

As part of the ongoing expansion of Panvel railway station, major structural changes are underway, including the relocation of the local ticket counter. The old two-storey ticket counter building is set to be demolished to facilitate the station's redevelopment, including the extension of the Harbour line up to Karjat and the development of a dedicated freight corridor. A new building has been constructed at the entrance of the station by the Central Railway. The first floor of the building is also expected to open soon, said an official.

ACB seeks govt nod to freeze ₹9cr assets of public servants

Somendra Sharma
MUMBAI

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has sent proposals in at least eight corruption-related cases to the state government seeking permission to confiscate assets worth Rs9.04 crore of the accused public servants. The ACB statistics revealed that the maximum number of cases are from the Mumbai region (3), followed by Pune (2) and one case each from Nashik, Nanded and Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar range.

The maximum number of

CORRUPTION CASES

cases are related to the officials urban development department (4), followed by one case each related to the officials of the transport, agriculture, animal husbandry, dairy development and fisheries department, water resources department and public works department.

The highest amount of assets involved are related to the officials of the urban development department (Rs3.13 crore), followed by water resources department

(Rs2.82 crore), public works department (Rs2.48 crore), transport department (Rs47.69 lakh) and agriculture, animal husbandry, dairy development and fisheries department (Rs12.77 lakh).

Last month, FPJ reported that most ACB trap cases are related to the officials of the revenue and land records department, followed by the police, panchayat samiti and Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Co. Ltd. Between January and April 23, this year, 243 corruption-related cases were registered in the state, including 238 trap cases.

HC upholds stay on movie release

Urvi Mahajani
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday upheld a stay on the release of the film Shaadi Ke Director Karan Aur Johar, ruling that its title infringes upon filmmaker Karan Johar's personality and publicity rights.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice MS Karnik dismissed an appeal by the film's maker, Sanjay Singh, against a March order by Justice Riyaz Chagla that had halted the movie's release following a plea by Johar.

The court observed that Johar enjoys 'immense goodwill and reputation' in both Indian and international entertainment industries. "The name 'Karan Johar' is solely associated with the respondent (Karan Johar) and forms a germane part of his personality and brand name," it said.

The court noted, "Since Karan Johar's name has become his brand name, the director has the economic right to commercially exploit the same as per his discretion."

Petition filed in HC seeks preservation of Savarkar Sadan

Urvi Mahajani
MUMBAI

A public interest litigation (PIL) has been filed in the Bombay High Court seeking the preservation of Savarkar Sadan, the historic residence of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, amid concerns that the iconic structure may be demolished for redevelopment.

The PIL was mentioned on Wednesday before a bench of Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice MS Karnik, who asked the petitioner to apply for urgent hearing. The plea follows media reports highlighting the potential demolition of the building, located in Dadar's Shivaji Park. Originally constructed in 1938 as a two-storey bungalow, Savarkar Sadan holds historical significance as the residence of Savarkar and the venue of several important meetings, including ones with Subhas Chandra Bose in 1940 and Nathuram Godse in 1948, prior to Mahatma Gandhi's assassination.

Over the decades, addi-



Shefali Parab-Pandit
MUMBAI

The ambitious Mumbai Coastal Road Project (MCRP) is nearing completion, with one vehicular underpass (VUP) and the remaining three arms expected to open to traffic this month. An integrated command and control centre (ICCC), located behind Tata Garden in Breach Candy, is also set to be ready within a month, serving as the central monitoring hub for the entire coastal road.

The MCRP features multi-level interchanges at Haji Ali, Peddar Road (Amarsons Garden), and Worli Sea Face, with four arms at Peddar Road, eight at Haji Ali, and six at Worli. A senior civic official said, "The final arm at Haji Ali, linking Worli to Lotus Jetty, will open in two days, while two arms connecting Prabhadevi and Dadar will follow within 15 days. The new VUP will ease south-bound traffic from Worli and Prabhadevi to Nariman Point and provide a direct link from the Sewri-Worli Connector, improving connectivity between the western suburbs and South Mumbai."

The ICCC will manage the entire coastal road through



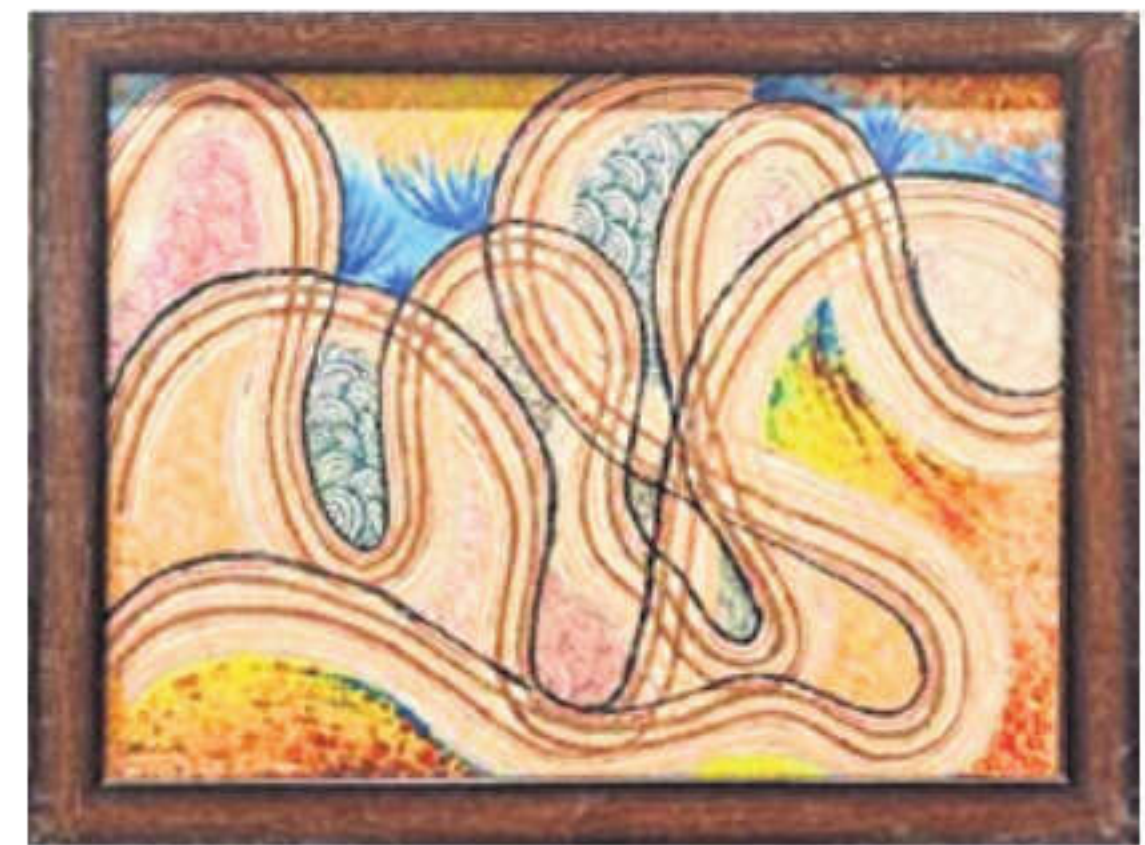
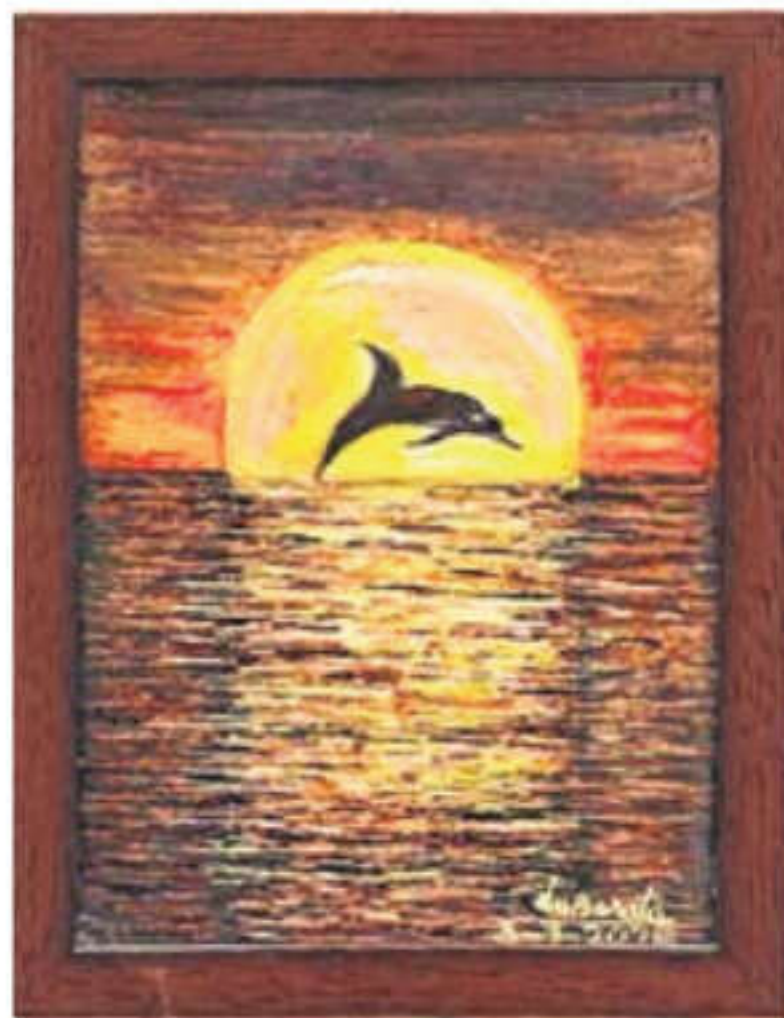
Control and command centre

real-time data from CCTV cameras, traffic sensors, and weather stations. It will also monitor air quality and tunnel ventilation, and maintain operations during power outages through battery backup and generators. As part of the advanced traffic management system (ATMS), it will use information and communication technology to streamline traffic flow.

"Currently in its final phase, the ICCC building will house a video wall for live surveillance, an emergency room, server room, and essential facilities. It includes two basement levels – one for fire and water tanks, and another for transformers, control panels, battery backup, diesel generators, and BEST equipment."

ANIL BORATE BRINGS NATURE ALIVE ON CANVAS

Through a stunning collection of paintings, Anil Borate captures the quiet elegance and understated beauty of nature, a theme he has explored passionately throughout his long and impactful career. Viewers will find themselves immersed in vivid scenes of sunflowers in bloom, sweeping seascapes, glowing sunsets, early sunrises, and various other moments where nature's calm meets colour. Borate's artworks serve as more than just visual treats; they're an invitation to pause, observe, and reconnect with the world around us.



GALLERY

FPH

Free Press House, Free Press Journal
Marg, 215, Nariman Point, Mumbai

WHEN: On till May 15, 2025

WHERE: Gallery FPH, Free Press House,
Nariman Point, Mumbai

Briefs

KOLHAPUR

Jaysingpur gets museum

Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde inaugurated a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, accompanied by a museum and library, in Jaysingpur. The Rs7 crore project, built on state-donated land, aims to inspire youth. Shinde announced a Rs250 crore package for civic infrastructure, including a stadium and water supply scheme. Jaysingpur MLA Rajendra Patil-Yadavkar was felicitated for spearheading the long-pending project. Guardian Minister Prakash Abitkar and other officials attended the event.

PIMPRI-CHINCHWAD

Singh thanks CM, Dy CMs

Municipal Corporation (PCMC) Commissioner & Administrator Shekhar Singh on Friday thanked Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis and Deputy CMs Ajit Pawar and Eknath Shinde after the civic body was ranked second in the state in the Municipal



Corporation category under the final assessment of the Chief Minister's 100 Days Action Plan. Scoring 85.71 out of 100, PCMC stood just behind Ulhasnagar Municipal Corporation, which secured the top spot with 86.29 points. PCMC's performance was distinguished by innovations such as an accessible, real-time website, AI-powered grievance redressal, GIS-based property tax reforms, smart sanitation facilities, and predictive analytics to improve civic service response times.

PUNE

Netizens slam youth's reel

A young student stopped a PMPML bus just to create an Instagram Reel. The video of this has gone viral on social media. Netizens have demanded punishment for the student. "If anyone is caught creating a Reel on the roads, they should be punished strictly. Such acts disrupt public order," said a user. "The Instagram account of this student should be deleted and he should be punished for this act," said another user.

MUNICIPAL APATHY | Residents allege eateries encroaching on free space

Encroachments, neglect plague iconic Saras Baug

Indu Bhagat

PUNE

Encroachments, lack of maintenance and poor sanitation at Saras Baug—one of Pune's prominent historical gardens—have raised concerns among residents, highlighting the Pune Municipal Corporation's (PMC) apathy towards preserving tourist landmarks.

Saras Baug, built by Nanasahab Peshwa and located at the foothills of Parvati, is a major attraction in the heart of the city. However, residents allege that its deteriorating condition is both an eyesore and a safety hazard. The main entrance is in poor shape, with the approach road heavily encroached by food stalls, forcing visitors to navigate narrow and unhygienic lanes.

Speaking to The Free Press Journal (FPJ), Srikanth Kakade, a 63-year-old resident who visits the garden daily for morning walks, said, "The eateries and food stalls have encroached on the footpath and even expanded beyond it to place their tables and chairs. There's no proper drainage. At night, when they wash their stalls, dirty water flows directly onto the road. This not only creates a foul stench but also endangers vehicles due to the narrowed road. People even park their



two-wheelers in the remaining space, making the situation worse. I go for a walk to breathe fresh air, but all I get is a dirty, stinking smell."

Echoing similar sentiments, Shirish Shinde, a resident of Guruwar Peth who visits Saras Baug daily to offer prayers to the Sarasbaug Ganpati, shared his distress with the FPJ.

"That place is holy, and still there's so much filth. The dog population in the garden has increased. They scare and even bite visitors. The entire road is encroached upon by shop owners, and there's no space for people to walk freely. Authorities must take

"The eateries and food stalls have encroached on the footpath and even expanded beyond it to place their tables and chairs. There's no proper drainage. At night, when they wash their stalls, dirty water flows directly onto the road."

— Srikanth Kakade, morning walker

"The entire road is encroached upon by shop owners, and there's no space for people to walk freely. Authorities must take strict action."

— Shirish Shinde, resident

strict action. What impression are we giving tourists? It should be clean and tidy so one can experience nature and its beauty," Shinde said. Social activist Sarang

Yadhavkar highlighted that the issue of encroached footpaths extends beyond Saras Baug. "Encroachment is not limited to this area—it's rampant across Pune. In



Kalyani Nagar, footpaths have been blocked for over a month. Water supply pipes belonging to L&T, the contractor for the 24x7 water supply scheme, have been lying on the footpath for months. I filed a complaint with the PMC," Yadhavkar told the FPJ, asking, "Who is responsible if a mishap occurs—PMC, L&T, Pune Police or citizens?"

Responding to the FPJ, a PMC official, who didn't want to be named, said, "Action is underway. We are removing the pipes from the footpath and also taking action regularly regarding footpath encroachments."

Sinhagad Road woes continue

Ankit Shukla/Indu Bhagat

PUNE

The traffic woes of Sinhagad Road residents are not seeming to end anytime soon. A week after the road saw a 6-km traffic jam which led to delays of at least four hours, the road is seeing a logjam from Dhayari Phata to Veer Baji Pasalkar Chowk every day, which has frustrated commuters, with signals being shut and just one traffic personnel on the spot in the scorching heat on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Rupali Chakankar, who resides in Dhayari, along with Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Mahesh Pokale and several other local politicians, met Additional Police Commissioner Manoj Patil, Aniruddha Pawaskar from the Road Department of the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) at the Sinhagad Road to review the traffic situation and discuss a remedial plan.

Speed breaker removed

On Tuesday night, a speed breaker near Funtime Theatre on Sinhagad Road



was identified and removed by the PMC. Additionally, the PMC initiated the work at Veer Baji Pasalkar Chowk to manage and improve traffic flow on Sinhagad Road, which included removing vehicles from the traffic post, reclaiming the occupied space and removing the cycle track, informed a PMC official.

"The traffic police chowky situated below the Wadgaon bridge will be removed soon. We are also planning to provide a substitute route for commuters on that stretch to help ease congestion," Patil told The Free Press Journal (FPJ).

Patil had visited Sinhagad Road on Saturday to assess the ongoing traffic issues. He had given instructions to increase the signal timing at the road leading to Dhayari junction at Veer Baji Pasalkar Chowk and to remove roadside encroachments near the Wadgaon Bridge. He also directed officials to shut down illegal parking spots. Four to five key bottlenecks were identified during the visit. The PMC acted on these suggestions on Tuesday and Wednesday.

"The bridge has no faults, it's actually reducing the time. Earlier, it would take 20 minutes from Vithalwadi to

Funtime theatre, but now it takes only three minutes," Pokale told the FPJ.

Vithalwadi to Funtime theatre, but now it takes only three minutes," Pokale told the FPJ. "But the main traffic issue now is occurring at Veer Baji Pasalkar Chowk as it is encroached by the fruit and vegetable sellers and autorickshaws, due to which that area has become a bottleneck. The authorities visited the site on May 3, and now they are removing the cycle track to widen the road by a few inches. We have suggested changing the signal timings to reduce traffic," he added.

Netizens slam PMPML driver

Staff Reporter

PUNE

The Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Ltd (PMPML) bus drivers have been accused of violating traffic rules.

In one such incident, a PMPML driver was caught driving while on the phone. A Reddit user shared the picture, which drew outrage on social media, with many slamming it as "typical Punekar" behaviour.

"Oh, this is so dangerously common here. I've been in such cabs where one scrolled reels all the way. One scrolled Facebook and then switched to Instagram Reels and then put on a movie. One just kept watching YouTube Shorts," a user commented.

"There's a new low of stupidity seen nowadays in Pune. Cab drivers, auto drivers are watching reels on phones while at stoplights or even in slow-moving traffic," another user shared.

A third user stated that in Bengaluru, drivers are instructed to either deposit their phones in lockers at their respective depots or switch them off before getting behind the wheel.

BJP's Kunal Tilak to contest PMC polls

Gaurav Kadam

PUNE

Kunal Tilak, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Maharashtra spokesperson and Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) Maharashtra vice-president, is all set to contest the forthcoming Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) elections.

Tilak was eager to contest the 2024 state polls from the Kasba Peth Assembly constituency. However, the saffron party chose to give the ticket to Hemant Rasane instead. With the next Assembly polls five years away, speaking to The Free Press Journal (FPJ), Tilak said he chose to contest the PMC polls.

"I wanted to contest the Assembly polls, but I didn't get the ticket. The next election is five years away, so I've decided to contest the PMC polls instead. I need to start somewhere, right? I must earn the mandate of the people and then prove my performance to my party," Tilak said.

When asked whether contesting the corporation polls would be perceived as a step down, he said, "No, not at all. I don't think it's a step down for me. Instead, I consider it a stepping stone in my political career. If you look at the BJP's structure, there's a natural progression—a corporator becomes an MLA, an MLA becomes an MP, and so on. Only a few lucky ones get to become MLAs or MPs directly."

Asked about the key issues he plans to highlight to voters in the lead-up to the polls, Tilak said he presents a different type of politics—the politics of development. "I am young, educated and honest. I come from a family that has maintained its integrity. I have already been speaking on



"I don't think it's a step down for me. Instead, I consider it a stepping stone in my political career."

— Kunal Tilak, Spokesperson, Maharashtra BJP

developmental works, traffic, roads and restoration of old properties in my constituency and will continue to do so. Besides, by being accessible, I will continue to gain the confidence of the people," he concluded.

With the Supreme Court directing the Maharashtra government to hold municipal elections within four months, political activity has picked up in Pune.

According to PMC officials, if the elections are held based on the existing population data and previous ward structure, the city will have 44 wards with four corporators per ward, taking the total to 166 corporators.

Until 2022, PMC had 162 corporators—a number likely to rise due to the inclusion of 34 merged villages.

PMPML rolls out pilot project to monitor bus health

Ankit Shukla

PUNE

The Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Ltd (PMPML) has decided to fit "On Board Devices" in its buses to curb sudden breakdowns on the roads.

Speaking to The Free Press Journal (FPJ), Nitin Narvekar, the Managing Director of PMPML, said, "The cases of breakdown increase, especially in the summer season, due to heat. Soon, a health monitoring system known as the 'On Board Device' will be set up in all PMPML buses. This device will alert bus drivers by indicating a signal (mini light blinking). The device's functional system will be connected directly to the control

room. As the driver informs about the blinking light, that particular bus will be checked technically and mechanically. With the help of this device, it is easier to detect faults in the buses, including coolant shortages, engine overheating and other technical glitches."

"In the initial stage, we have installed this in four buses. Its analysis will be done, and once the results are positive, it will soon be fitted in all the buses. This will be very helpful—knowing about upcoming faults will help maintain the buses, and there will be very few chances of a breakdown on the road. Earlier, there were no devices installed, and the driver was unaware of the glitches," he added.

sustainable waste management

PMC begins e-cycle trial for sanitary workers

Indu Bhagat

PUNE

The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC), in a bid to promote sustainable waste management, has decided to explore options to procure electric cycles for garbage collection.

The city generates more than 2,100 tonnes of solid waste daily, which is collected and transported to solid waste processing plants located in different parts of the city. The PMC motor vehicle department spends around Rs113 crore per year on vehicle maintenance, including fuel, repairs,

maintenance and staff salaries.

The city's 4,000 waste pickers—most of whom are women—collect garbage daily. These workers provide door-to-door waste collection services to over 40 lakh residents, covering nearly 68% of the city's garbage collection.

Remarkably, Pune's plastic recycling rate stands at 37%—over three times the national average—largely thanks to the efforts of these waste pickers.

Traditionally, sanitary workers have used pushcarts for door-to-door collection, helping the civic



body implement decentralised waste management. This system enhances waste segregation, triples recycling

rates compared to mechanised systems, and creates four times more employment. However, the work is

physically demanding, causing significant fatigue and strain for the waste pickers.

To ease this burden, a group of committed waste workers known as the Hardworking Panchayat has partnered with Tata Motors and Social Alpha to electrify 150 pushcarts. Delhi-based startup Accelero Vehicles has developed special electric kits that can be fitted onto existing carts, designed with input from waste pickers to meet their specific needs.

This initiative, part of Tata Motors' CSR and Affirmative Action efforts, aims to improve the working condi-

tions and dignity of waste pickers in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad.

Initially, 150 e-carts (5% of the 3,000 total carts in use) will be deployed for a three-month trial period. The results will be evaluated jointly by waste pickers and the PMC. If successful, the model could be expanded to benefit sanitation workers and waste handlers across India.

Additionally, specialised training programmes are planned to support waste pickers, including skills for horticultural work, broadening their livelihood opportunities.

Drunk man bludgeons male friend to death

Ankit Shukla

PUNE

Pune Police have arrested a 40-year-old man for murdering his male friend for rejecting his sexual advances, officials said on Tuesday. The incident took place on May 5 near Maladhakka Chowk, they added.

According to the police, the accused has been identified as Bheem Gaikwad (40), a resident of Latur district, while the deceased is Kishor Kamble (35), a native of Satara.

"Kamble was found dead at the roadside near Maladhakka

Chowk on May 5. In the medical report, it was found that Kamble was assaulted with a heavy stone on his head and died due to severe blood loss. Later, police detained Gaikwad after watching the CCTV footage. He was arrested within the Samarth Police Station jurisdiction," the police said.

Inspector Umesh Gitte said, "At the time of the incident, they both were drunk. Over the demand for sexual favours, an argument occurred between them, which later became the cause of Kamble's death."

Briefs

CSN

Essay competition

Various events were organised to mark the Jain Heritage Day, Maharashtra Day and International Labour Day in PU Jain School recently. The winners of the essay competition organised to mark the occasion were awarded prizes. The Jain Education Society felicitated the meritorious students on the occasion. The flag hoisting was done by the chief guest, Sunil Patni. Dignitaries Sunil Setty, Nilesh Kala and others were present.

CSN

Blood donation

Dr Hedgewar Hospital and Bharat Vikas Parishad organised a blood donation camp at Sudhakarnagar on Monday to mark the International Labour Day. More than 40 people donated blood. Speaking on the occasion, president Anil Soni and Ram Malani stated the importance of blood donation.

CSN

Water evaporates

Around 1.951 TMC water has been evaporating daily from the Jayakwadi Dam in Paithan, said Executive Engineer Prashant Jadhav. Presently, the water storage in the dam is 37.39%, and water is evaporating in large quantities daily. Around 184 TMC water has been reserved for Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar city, Jadhav said.

DEADLOCK ENDS | Aspirants happy and vying for local poll tickets

CSMC may likely go to polls around Diwali

Manish Gajbhiye

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

The Supreme Court on Tuesday, May 6, directed state election authorities to conduct long-pending local body elections within four months, ending a five-year deadlock caused by OBC reservation disputes. The ruling paves the way for Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar Municipal Corporation (CSMC) elections, likely before Diwali, with the poll process expected to commence within two weeks of the Election Commission receiving the court order.

CSMC's 115-corporator



term expired in 2020, with administrative functions handled successively by municipal commissioners Astik Kumar Pandey, Abhijeet

Chaudhary and current administrator G Sreekanth. Despite a 2022 government order increasing corporators to 126 across 42 prabhags

(electoral wards), reservation delimitation remained stalled.

Apart from the municipal corporation, the verdict also revives elections in six municipal councils—Kannad, Paithan, Vaijapur, Khuldabad, Gangapur, Sillod—and Phulambri Nagar Panchayat, all currently run by administrators.

Political aspirants across Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar welcomed the decision, as many of them have been vying for a ticket in the polls.

The Maharashtra State Election Commission will now determine reservation matrices before issuing formal notifications.

‘Demystifying Healthcare AI’ conference at MIT on Sunday

Manish Gajbhiye

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

Growth Catalysts, in collaboration with MIT Hospital, and partnership with Marathwada Accelerator for Growth & Incubation Council (MAGIC), is organising a national conference titled “Demystifying Healthcare AI” on Sunday at Arya/Anand Hall, MIT Institute, Beed Bypass.

This conference will feature discussions on key themes such as enhancing diagnostic accuracy with AI, personalised patient care, improving operational efficiency in hospitals, and the future of AI in healthcare, along with its ethical considerations.

Distinguished speakers, including Dr Avinash Supe, Professor Emeritus, KEM Hospital; Dr Anant Pandhare, president, AIIMS Nagpur; Dr Amit Kharat, co-founder, DeepTek.AI; Dr Ajit Bhagwat, director of cardiology, Kamalnayan Bajaj Hospital; Prof Renu John, professor, Biomedical Engineering, IIT Hyderabad; and Dr Matthias Zobel, CEO, CAIMAZO, Germany; Gregor Matenaer, co-founder, CAIMAZO, Germany, will share their insights and engage in discussions on the future of AI in healthcare.

Speaking about the conference, Medha Deshpande, the founder and CEO of Growth Catalysts, stated,

“Data is fundamental to AI in healthcare. Doctors, researchers, and technology developers in the medical field must come together to develop actionable and effective AI systems.

The geographical structure, population density, resource constraints, and disease patterns in India are completely different from Western countries. Therefore, it is crucial to create distinct, localised algorithms tailored to the healthcare needs of India.”

“Such localised algorithms will enable AI to make more accurate decisions and ensure that healthcare services reach both urban and rural patients efficiently,” Deshpande added.

15K opt for PM Suryaghar

Manish Gajbhiye

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

The Union Government has launched the Prime Minister Suryaghar scheme to provide free electricity to consumers using less than 300 units of electricity in a month. Under the scheme, the consumers establish a solar system on the roofs of their houses to generate electricity. In all, 15,000 consumers have taken the benefit of the scheme in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar circle, and the solar set of 53.4mw capacity has been installed on the roofs of their houses. The domestic users who have installed the solar set can use around 120 to 360 units of electricity absolutely free. The consumers are provided loans from various

Unseasonal rain lashes district for second day

Manish Gajbhiye

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

Unseasonal rainfall, along with strong winds and hailstorms, lashed the entire district for two consecutive days on Monday and Tuesday. The meteorological experts have opined that the cloudy conditions will prevail for the next two days. Meanwhile, the residents have been relieved from the scorching heat as the temperature has gone down. However, the standing crops on the farms have been damaged due to heavy rains.

The unseasonal rainfall started in the district from Monday afternoon. The rural areas in the district received rain on Tuesday as well. Hailstorms were experienced at some places. The maximum temperature recorded on Tuesday was 36.5°C and the minimum was 23.1°C. The meteorological department



has issued an alert regarding unseasonal rain till May 8 in the district.

Rain with hailstorms and strong winds has been experienced in the Waluj Mahanagar area on Monday and Tuesday. The residents were in chaos due to the sudden rainfall. Some people enjoyed the rain while the farmers incurred heavy crop losses. The farmers incurred

losses as the standing crops of bajra, onion, vegetables, tomato, chilly, and others were damaged in the rain. Waluj MIDC, Teesgaon, Pandharpur, Waluj, Naigaon, Bajajnagar, Ranjangaon, Jogeshwari and other places were affected by the rain.

Due to the rain there was very little traffic on the roads, with two-wheeler riders seeking shelters.

Young farmer dies due to lightning

Manish Gajbhiye

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

A young farmer died due to lightning at Sisarkhed-Udangaon, Ghatnanadra in Sillod taluka on Tuesday evening. The deceased farmer has been identified as Sunil Govind Chirkhe (25). The entire district has been affected due to unseasonal rainfall since Monday. On Tuesday, Sunil was working on his farm when it started raining with strong winds. Suddenly, lightning fell on him and he succumbed to the burns.

The Sillod district received heavy rain with a hailstorm on Tuesday afternoon. The areas



of Bharadi, Abhay Pimpaldari, Balapur, Golegaon, Kalgaon, Ajanta, Shivna, Sillod, Palshi, and Nillod received heavy rainfall. The power supply was interrupted at most places. The Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd (MSEDCL) employees were working till late at night to restore the power supply.

Police ganja row

PTI

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

An employee of the police department has been suspended for allegedly smoking ganja while on duty at the superintendent of police's (SP) residence in Beed district, an official said on Tuesday.

Beed SP Navneet Kanwat's official residence is under maintenance, the official from Beed police said. Balu Bahirwad, a staffer with the police department, was deployed at the SP's bungalow. When Kanwat reached the premises for inspection on Sunday, he found Bahirwad smoking ganja on duty and suspended him, the official said.

105.71 pts

34.80 pts

42 paise

₹1000

₹440

SENSEX 80,746.78 | NIFTY 24,414.40 | USD/INR 84.77 | GOLD 1,00,750.00 | SILVER 98,940.00

Briefs

BSE, NSE curb overseas access to websites

Amid India launching mis-
sile attacks on Pakistan
and Pakistan-occupied
Kashmir, leading stock
exchanges BSE and NSE
have taken precautionary
measures by blocking their
websites for international
users, sources said. "BSE,
being a critical market
infrastructure institution
(MII), proactively and con-
tinuously monitors risks at
domestic and international
levels for potential cyber
threats," a BSE spokesper-
son said, explaining the
rationale behind the deci-
sion.

SAT rejects Gensol plea to stay SEBI order

The Securities Appellate
Tribunal on Wednesday
rejected an appeal by
Gensol Engineering Ltd to
stay a SEBI interim order
barring it and its pro-
moters Anmol Singh Jaggi
and Puneet Singh Jaggi
over the issue of fund
diversion and governance
concerns. The bench of
the appellate tribunal
comprising Justice P.S.
Dinesh Kumar and techni-
cal member Meera
Swarup have given the
company two weeks to
reply to the SEBI on the
temporary ex-parte order
and directed the markets
regulator to give a final
order in Gensol's case
within four weeks.

UK FTA: Goyal, exporters to meet on May 8

Commerce and Industry
Minister Piyush Goyal will
meet representatives of
export promotion councils
(EPCs) here on May 8 to
discuss matters related to
the free trade agreement
with the UK, an industry
official said on
Wednesday.

RBI recognises FIMMDA as SRO

The Reserve Bank on
Wednesday said it has re-
cognised the Fixed Income
Money Market and
Derivatives Association of
India (FIMMDA) as an SRO
in financial markets regu-
lated by the central bank.
In August last year, the RBI
had issued the framework
for recognition of Self-
Regulatory Organisations
(SROs) in financial mar-
kets. The norms were
issued in view of the
potential role of SROs in
strengthening compliance
culture among their
members.

CCI issues norms to assess predatory pricing practices

Competition Commission
of India (CCI) has notified
the regulations for deter-
mining the cost of produc-
tion, a move that will help
the watchdog to more
effectively assess alleged
predatory pricing and
deep discounting prac-
tices especially in the
quick commerce and e-
commerce segments.

\$60-70/A BARREL | Upstream players' capex plans to remain intact Softening crude oil prices to reduce import bill by ₹1.8L cr

PTI
NEW DELHI

India, the world's third largest
oil importing and consuming
nation, is likely to save as much
as Rs 1.8 lakh crore on import
of crude oil and LNG if the
trend of softening interna-
tional energy rates continues,
Icra said Wednesday.

India, which meets over 85
per cent of its crude oil needs
through imports, spent USD
242.4 billion on buying crude
from overseas in the fiscal year
ended March 31, 2025. With
domestic production meeting
roughly half of the demand, it
also spent USD 15.2 billion on
import of liquefied natural gas
(LNG) in the fiscal.

Oil prices in international
markets fell to over four-year
low of USD 60.23 per barrel
earlier this week on fears of
rising global supply at a time
when demand outlook is
uncertain. Brent crude and US
West Texas Intermediate



crude, which fell to their
lowest since February 2021,
have since risen to USD 62.4 on
signs of more Europe and
China demand and less US
output. Still the rates are USD
20 per barrel lower than
March 2024 when petrol and
diesel prices were cut by Rs 2
per litre each ahead of general
elections.

"Icra expects average crude
prices for FY2026 (April 2025
to March 2026 fiscal year)
to remain in the USD 60-70 per
barrel range," the rating
agency said in a note.

Earnings of upstream companies are estimated at ₹25,000 crore for FY2026, says ICRA

growth, coupled with an
announcement by OPEC+
to steadily withdraw their
production cuts, starting with
411,000 barrels per day addi-
tion from May 2025 and
another 411,000 bpd from June
2025, have resulted in oil prices
declining from about USD 77 a
barrel as on March 31 to about
USD 60-62.

Stating that India meets a
large portion of its domestic
crude oil requirements
through imports, Icra said in
the scenario where crude
remains in USD 60-70 a barrel
range, the profit before tax for
upstream players in FY2026 is
expected to be lower by Rs
25,000 crore.

Rupee falls 42 paise to close at 84.77



PTI
MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated 42
paise to close at 84.77 against
the US dollar on Wednesday,
as heightened cross-border
tensions following India's
military strikes against ter-
rorist camps in Pakistan and
Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir
weighed on the domestic cur-
rency.

At the interbank foreign
exchange, the domestic unit
opened at 84.65 and moved
between an intra-day high of
84.47 and a low of 84.93
against the greenback. The
unit ended the session at
84.77, registering a fall of 42
paise over its previous closing
level.

Gold rallies ₹1K to reclaim ₹1L/ 10g

PTI
NEW DELHI

Gold prices surged Rs 1,000 to
breach the crucial Rs 1 lakh
per 10 gram-mark in the
national capital on Wednesday
as escalating tensions between
India and Pakistan triggered a
safe-haven buying rush.

According to the All India
Sarafa Association, the
precious metal of 99.9 per cent
purity climbed Rs 1,000 to Rs
1,00,750 per 10 grams from
Tuesday's closing of Rs 99,750
per 10 grams.

In retaliation for the



Pahalgam terror attack, Indian
armed forces early on
Wednesday carried out mis-
sile strikes on nine terror tar-
gets in Pakistan and PoK,
including the Jaish-e-
Mohammad stronghold of
Bahawalpur and Lashkar-e-
Taiba's base in Muridke.

Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per

cent purity jumped Rs 1,050 to
Rs 1,00,350 per 10 grams on
Wednesday. It had ended at Rs
99,300 per 10 grams in the pre-
vious market close.

The yellow metal had ear-
lier touched its lifetime high of
Rs 1,01,600 per 10 grams on
April 22, when it surged Rs
1,800.

In addition, silver prices also
rose Rs 440 to Rs 98,940 per
kg. The white metal had
settled at Rs 98,500 per kg on
Tuesday. In the international
markets, spot gold fell USD
62.12 or 1.8 per cent at USD
3,369.65 per ounce.

'FTA to help double garment exports to Britain in 3 yrs'

PTI
NEW DELHI

The free trade agreement
(FTA) with the UK will help
double India's ready-made
garment exports to Britain in
the next three years, AEP
said on Wednesday.

Apparel Export Promotion
Council (AEP) Chairman
Sudhir Sekhri said that against
the backdrop of demand con-
traction in major economies,

Russia-Ukraine conflict, Israel-
Hamas war, American recip-
rocal tariff and Chinese bel-
ligerence, there was uncer-
tainty and disruption impact-
ing the global trade adversely.

"This deal has come as a
boon, removing immediately
tariff disadvantage of 9.6 per
cent and making us competi-
tive in the UK market. Now the
Made in India ready-made gar-
ment will be cheaper on UK
shelves and we will be at par

with some of our major com-
petitors who enjoyed duty-free
access in the UK market," he
said. India is the fourth largest
supplier of garments with a 6.1
per cent share of the total
RMG import of the UK.

The exports to the UK from
India grew 7.8 per cent to USD
1.4 billion in 2024-25. "With
this deal in place, India is all
poised to double the RMG
exports to the UK in the next
three years," he said.

RBI issues framework for new norms

Informist
NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India on
Wednesday issued a frame-
work for formulation of regu-
lations, outlining the broad
principles it will follow while
making norms under various
laws and rules. "The
Framework reinforces and
demonstrates the Reserve
Bank's commitment to
enhanced transparency and
consultative approach for
issuance of Regulations," the
RBI said in a statement.

As per the framework, the
central bank will first publish
draft regulations, give at least
21 days for stakeholders and
the public to submit their com-
ments, provide a 'general state-
ment' of its response to the
comments received, and then
issue the final regulations.

US Fed holds rates steady

FPJ Business Desk
WASHINGTON / MUMBAI

The US Federal Reserve on
Wednesday held its key inter-
est rate unchanged as it waits
for the Donald Trump admin-
istration's trade policy to take
shape and sees its impact on a
sputtering economy.

Given uncertainty
sweeping the politi-
cal and economic
landscape, the
Federal Open
Market Committee
held its benchmark
overnight borrowing
rate in a range
between 4.25%-4.5%, where it
has been since December.

The post-meeting statement
noted the volatility and how it
is factoring into policy deci-
sions. "Uncertainty about the
economic outlook has
increased further," the state-
ment said. "The Committee is



attentive to the risks to both
sides of its dual mandate and
judges that the risks of higher
unemployment and higher
inflation have risen."

It added "economic activity
has continued to expand at a
solid pace" and the job market
remains "solid" while inflation
"remains somewhat
elevated." That
doesn't sound like a
Fed poised to lower
rates in the short
term. However, the
statement did not
address the tariffs,
though Chair
Jerome Powell

addressed the issue at his post-
meeting news meeting.

Stocks briefly ceded gains
after the rate announcement
but mostly recovered, with the
Dow Jones Industrial up 300
points despite some worries
over the Fed's characterisation
of the economic risks.

India to retaliate if UK's carbon tax hits exports

PTI
NEW DELHI

The India-UK free trade pact
has no provision to counter
Britain's proposed carbon tax,
but amid uncertainty and
absence of UK legislation, New
Delhi has preserved its right to
retaliate or rebalance conces-
sions, if future measures
impact domestic exports, an
official said. The UK govern-
ment in December 2023
decided to implement its
Carbon Border Adjustment
Mechanism starting 2027.

As per economic think tank
GTRI, India's exports worth
\$775 million to the UK may be
impacted due to its move to
introduce carbon tax on prod-
ucts such as iron and steel, alu-
minium, fertiliser and cement,
from 2027. The official said the
free trade pact with the UK
has no provisions to counter
CBAM, which has the poten-
tial to nullify the concessions
offered by Britain to India.

Investors chasing resilience, not dazzling short-term gains

OP SINDOOR IMPACT

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

Intelligent investors on
Wednesday reconfirmed their
'mantra of chasing resilience',
and not dazzling short-term
returns. Indian investors have
been scrambling into havens
such as gold, and diversifying
investment portfolios by buy-
ing fundamentally strong
stocks after the markets started
witnessing massive FII outflow
from Jan-March.

During the first 3 months of
2025, FIIs have been big sellers.
Cumulatively FIIs sold equities
for nearly Rs 1.30 lakh crore
during this 3-month period.
Key indices Sensex and Nifty
settled higher on Wednesday
as India launched missile
strikes "Operation Sindoor"
on terrorist hideouts in Pakistan
and POK. The 30-share BSE



Sensex closed 105.71 pts higher
at 80,746.78. The Nifty 50
advanced by 34.80 pts to settle
at 24,414.40.

"Historical data suggests that
the Indian stock market has
generally responded with resil-
ience to serious geopolitical
events. Except for the
Parliament attack in 2001, all
other incidents led to positive
market returns over the
medium to long term," said
Abhishek Jaiswal, Fund
Manager at Finavenue.

"Mkts exhibited strong resil-

ience amid recent Indo-Pak
border tensions, the measured
market response indicated that
geopolitical risks were largely
priced in and expectations of
de-escalation are prevailing
among investors," said Vinod
Nair, Head of Research, at
Geojit Investments. "What
stands out in "Operation
Sindoor" from the market per-
spective is its focused and non-
escalatory nature. We have to
wait and watch how the enemy
reacts to these precision strikes
by India. The mkt is unlikely to
be impacted by the retaliatory
strike by India since that was
known and discounted by the
market. The main catalyst of
the market resilience in India is
the sustained FII buying of the
last 14 trading days which has
touched a cumulative figure of
Rs 43,940 crore in the cash
market," said Dr VK
Vijayakumar, Chief Investment
Strategist, at Geojit
Investments.

CCEA OKs revised SHAKTI scheme for allocation of coal to power plants

PTI
NEW DELHI

The Cabinet Committee on
Economic Affairs on
Wednesday approved the
revised Scheme for Harnessing
and Allocating Koyala
Transparently in India
(SHAKTI) for allocation of coal
to the power sector to help
them meet long-term and
short-term coal requirement.

The approval was given by
the Cabinet Committee on
Economic Affairs (CCEA)
chaired by the Prime Minister
Narendra Modi, in a move

aimed at simplification of the
linkage process.

The CCEA "has approved
grant of fresh coal linkages to
thermal power plants of cen-
tral sector/state sector/inde-
pendent power producers
(IPPs)," the coal ministry said
in a statement.

With the introduction of
Revised SHAKTI (Scheme for
Harnessing and Allocating
Koyala Transparently in India)
Policy, two windows --- coal
linkage to central gencos/states
at notified price and coal link-
age to all gencos at a premium
above notified price -- have

been proposed. The ministry
further said 'under coal at no-
tified price' segment the exist-
ing mechanism for grant of coal
linkage to central sector ther-
mal power projects (TPPs)
including JVs and their sub-
sidiary will continue.

Moreover, coal linkage ear-
marked to states may be uti-
lized by states in its own genco,
Independent Power Producers
(IPPs) to be identified through
Tariff-Based Competitive
Bidding (TBCB) or existing
IPPs having PPA for setting up
of a new expansion unit under
'coal at notified price' window.

Gilts up; India-Pak tensions seen ebbing after flare-up

Informist
NEW DELHI

Government bond prices
ended higher in the face of
continuous volatility after a
flare-up in tensions between
India and Pakistan on
Wednesday. Traders picked
up bonds on the hope that
there would be no further
escalation in tensions
between the two nuclear
powers, and looked ahead to
rate cuts in India, dealers said.

The 6.79%, 2034 bond
ended at INR 103.17, up from
INR 103.07 on Tuesday. The
10-year benchmark yield
ended at 6.34%, against 6.35%
on Tuesday. Price gains were
not significant as caution
about the geopolitical situ-
ation prevailed, though the
two-way trade led to a rise in
bond market volumes. Gilts
had fallen slightly for a few
minutes after opening flat,
before reversing losses.

SEBI says REITs, InvITs must declare quarterly results, tightens disclosures

Informist
NEW DELHI

The Securities and Exchange
Board of India Wednesday
amended the master circulars
governing Real Estate
Investment Trusts and
Infrastructure Investment
Trusts to declare financial
results every quarter. These
changes will come into effect in
the period started Apr. 1, the
regulator said in two circulars
uploaded on its website.

Earlier, these trusts had to
declare their financial infor-
mation only in half-yearly and
annual intervals. The quarterly
filings will have to be done
within 45 days of the end of the
quarter and the annual result
filing can be done within 60
days of the March quarter end-
ing, in line with other listed
entities.

"The InvIT shall submit
financial results in respect of
the last quarter along with the
results for the entire financial



year, with a note stating that
the figures of last quarter are
the balancing figures between
audited figures in respect of the
full financial year and the pub-
lished year to date figures upto
the third quarter of the current
financial year," SEBI said. The
same rule applies verbatim to
REITs. A statement of Net
Distribute Cash Flows will be
filed alongside the financial
results, the circulars said, and
the entity will disclose it in the
annual and half-yearly reports.
SEBI also added to the list of
disclosures the entities will
have to make, which will
include statements on assets
and liabilities, changes in
unitholders' equity, cash flows,
net assets at fair value and total
returns at fair value. These will
have to be made on a half-
yearly and annual basis only.

Crisil report

Softer vegetable prices lower meal cost in Apr

PTI
NEW DELHI

Softer vegetable prices helped
in lowering the cost of home-
made meals in April this year,
a report said on Wednesday.

As per the "roti rice rate"
report prepared by an arm of
domestic rating agency Crisil,
the cost of a typical vegetarian
meal reduced 4 per cent year-
on-year and 1 per cent month-
on-month to Rs 26.3 in April.

The on-year fall in prices
was attributed to the sharp
decline in vegetable prices,
which included a 34 per cent



plummet in tomato, an 11 per
cent decrease in potato and a 6
per cent drop in onions.

A 19 per cent increase in
vegetable oil prices due to
higher import duties and a 6

per cent rise in LPG cylinder
prices limited the decline in
thali costs, the report said.

A non-vegetarian thali
declined by 4 per cent year-
on-year and 2 per cent month-

on-month to Rs 53.9 per plate,
it added.

Further, the report said that
the decline in the price of a
non-veg meal was influenced
by the softening of the veg-
etable prices and a dip in pou-
ltry prices, which was hit by
oversupply as bird flu in some
peninsular states impacted demand.

"Going forward, wheat and
pulses prices are expected to
moderate amid strong
domestic output," said Pushan
Sharma, director of research at
Crisil Intelligence. "Edible oil
prices are also likely to soften

over the next 2-3 months as
global supplies pick up, mainly
from Argentina, Indonesia,
and Malaysia. Rice prices,
though, are expected to inch
up with a projected increase in
exports. And among veg-
etables, onion prices are likely
to be rangebound while tom-
ato prices are forecast to rise
on account of seasonality."

A vegetarian thali com-
prises roti, vegetables such as
onion, tomato, and potato,
rice, dal, curd, and salad. A
non-vegetarian thali has the
same elements except for dal,
which is replaced by chicken.

Briefs

Voltas Q4 profit more than doubles to ₹236 crore

Home appliances maker Voltas on Wednesday reported over twofold rise in net profit at Rs 236 crore for March quarter FY25 driven by higher revenues. It had posted a net profit of Rs 111 crore in the January-March period of the preceding 2023-24 financial year, the company said in a regulatory filing.

UBL Jan-Mar profit up 19.8% at ₹97.76 crore

Beer maker United Breweries Ltd (UBL) on Wednesday reported a 19.87 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to Rs 97.76 crore in the January-March quarter of 2024-25 compared to Rs 81.55 crore in the January-March quarter a year ago.

GreenLine partners with Shriram Fin

Essar group's green logistics solutions provider GreenLine Mobility Solutions has partnered with Shriram Finance for the deployment of a new fleet of LNG-powered trucks, a statement said on Wednesday. GreenLine Mobility Solutions on Wednesday flagged off a new fleet of LNG-powered trucks at Chakan, Pune, the statement said. The deployment is supported by Shriram Finance Ltd. GreenLine is an Essar venture and India's only green logistics operator of LNG and electric-powered heavy commercial trucks.

Solex Energy bags ₹451 cr order from KPI Green Energy

Solex Energy on Wednesday said it has secured a Rs 451.41 crore order from KPI Green Energy to supply solar modules. The modules will be used in KPI Green's GUVNL projects, part of their own Independent Power Producer (IPP) portfolio, a company statement said.

Welspun Corp bags ₹1,950 cr order

Homegrown Welspun Corp Ltd (WCL) has secured an export order worth Rs 1,950 crore for the supply of line pipes and bends. With these new orders, its current consolidated global order book stands at around Rs 19,300 crore, the company said.

Mouri Tech files ₹1,500 cr IPO papers

IT Solutions and services firm Mouri Tech has refilled draft papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise Rs 1,500 crore through an Initial Public Offering (IPO). In its fresh Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) filed on May 5, Mouri Tech proposed to raise Rs 250 crore through selling new shares, while promoters and a selling shareholder plan to sell stock to the tune of Rs 1,250 crore.

Routematic raises \$40 mn

Business-to-business ride services company Routematic has raised USD 40 million in a funding round led by venture capital firm Fullerton Carbon Action Fund and Shift4Good, senior officials of the company said on Wednesday. The company plans to use the fund to strengthen its business matrix and expedite its journey towards public listing, Routematic, Founder and CEO, Sriram Kannan told PTI.

SATCOM SERVICES: GOVT ISSUES LETTER OF INTENT TO STARLINK

Agencies
NEW DELHI



and Jio Satellite Communications. Unlike conventional satellite services that rely on distant geostationary satellites, Starlink utilises the world's largest low earth orbit or LEO constellation (550 km above earth).

This constellation of LEO satellites (7,000 now but eventually set to grow to over 40,000) and its mesh delivers broadband internet capable of

supporting streaming, online gaming, and video calls.

Security has emerged as a core concern for the government as it considers the implications of allowing global satcom firms to operate in Indian skies. Union Minister of State for Telecom on Tuesday said that while the issue remains "a little complicated," the proposal is in its last stages of review. He was addressing reporters during the Bharat Telecom event in Delhi. The importance of this, especially in the current climate. "The government's security norms for satcom are important, especially in the present scenario where hostile nation Pakistan is making an attempt to hack the country's system," he said.

Jio adds 21.4 lakh mobile users in March; Airtel gains 12.5 lakh

Reliance Jio cemented its lead in Indian telecom market adding 21.74 lakh wireless subscribers in March, while Bharti Airtel's monthly gains were at 12.50 lakh users, according to data released by telecom regulator TRAI on Wednesday.

Vodafone Idea lost 5.41 lakh mobile users from its network, and its subscriber base shrunk to 20.53 crore users.

As per the data, Jio's addition of 21.74 lakh wireless users during the month pushed up its subscriber count to 46.97 crore.

For Bharti Airtel, the mobile base expanded to 38.98 crore, with addition of 12.50 lakh users in March.

The urban mobile subscriptions fell 0.26 per cent while rural wireless count was up 0.92 per cent.

"Wireline subscribers increased from 36.91 million at the end of February-25 to 37.04 million at the end of March-25," TRAI release said pegging the monthly rate of growth at 0.37 per cent.

PNB Q4 PAT surges 52%

Plans to raise ₹8,000 cr via bonds in FY26

PTI
NEW DELHI

State-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) on Wednesday reported 52 per cent rise in net profit at Rs 4,567 crore for March quarter FY25 helped by robust business growth and recovery. During the quarter, the bank's total income increased to Rs 36,705 crore from Rs 32,361 crore a year ago, PNB said in a regulatory filing.

Speaking to the media after the board meeting, PNB MD and CEO Ashok Chandra said the growth in profit can be attributed to overall business growth, recovery in technically written off accounts and treasury income, among others.

Chandra said the bank's capital adequacy ratio remains high at 17 per cent and therefore there is no need for equity capital during the current financial year.

However, the board approved a proposal to raise up to Rs 8,000 crore through issuance of Basel III-compliant bonds to be raised in one or more tranches during 2025-26.

Coal India Jan-Mar net profit rises 12% to ₹9,604 cr

PTI
NEW DELHI

State-owned Coal India Ltd on Wednesday reported a 12 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 9,604.02 crore in the quarter ended March 2025 on the back of higher income.

The company had posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 8,572.14 crore in the year-ago period, Coal India Ltd (CIL) said in a filing to BSE.

Total income during the January-March period rose to



Rs 41,761.76 crore from Rs 40,457.59 crore a year ago, the filing said.

The company said that the Ib Valley coal washery of Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL) with a capacity of 10 million tonnes per annum (MTPA), which began its oper-

ations in April last year, became the largest non-coking coal washery in the country.

The facility has already delivered Rs 314 crore in additional revenue, reinforcing the value of infrastructure modernisation, it said.

"Profit Before Tax (PBT) for the Q4 of 2025 rose significantly to Rs 12,873.19 crore, registering an 11 per cent year-on-year growth from Rs 11,581.57 crore in Q4 of the previous fiscal," the coal behemoth said.

NTPC to raise ₹4,000 cr via NCDs on May 9

PTI
NEW DELHI

State-run power giant NTPC on Wednesday said it has decided to raise Rs 4,000 crore through the issuance of non-convertible debentures on a private placement basis on May 9.

Proceeds will be utilised for, inter alia, funding of capital expenditure, refinancing of existing loans and other general corporate purposes, according to a regulatory filing.

According to the filing, the NTPC has decided to issue unsecured non-convertible debentures of Rs 4,000 crore on May 9, 2025, through private placement at a coupon rate of 6.84 per cent per annum for a tenor of 10 years, maturing on May 9, 2035, under the board resolution on June 29, 2024 and subsequent approval obtained through shareholders' resolution on August 29, 2024.

This is the second issue of debentures under the above mentioned approval, it stated, adding that the debentures are proposed to be listed on the BSE.

HUDCO FY25 net profit jumps 28% to ₹2,709 cr

Plans to tap Japanese mkt to raise \$2 billion

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

State-owned Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) on Wednesday announced a 28% (y-o-y) jump in its net profit at Rs 2,709.14 crore for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2025 as compared to Rs 2,116.74 crore recorded for FY2024. The results indicate the company's effective cost management and operations efficiencies. The company also declared a final dividend of Rs 1.05 per equity share for FY25, subject to shareholder approval.

The company has reported a 3.93% rise in its consolidated



net profit at Rs 727.74 crore for Q4 FY25 as against Rs 700.16 crore in the same period of last year. "Our financial results are reflective of our strategic initiatives as well as the support of all stakeholders, and being a government company with lowest levels of net non-performing assets, debt-equity and comfortable compound annual growth rate, is envisaged to play a catalytic role in financing infrastructure beyond housing for creating assets for Viksit Bharat," HUDCO CMD Sanjay Kulshrestha told mediaper-

sons. He said the company is planning to raise around \$2 billion through overseas borrowings in FY26 by tapping the Japanese market through a mix of ECBs and bonds.

In the second quarter of FY26, the company plans to raise \$500 million through ECBS, which also includes a bond series. Both will be in yen-denominated terms. From overseas borrowings, it may also look at the possibility of issuing social bonds in the Japanese market this fiscal year. Nearly 80% of the company's total bor-

rowing is from the domestic bonds and loans. Of the Rs 65,000 crore that HUDCO plans to raise, it will raise about Rs 1,000 crore through 54EC capital gains bonds and Rs 5,000 crore through five-year zero coupon bonds.

CMD said that the initiatives taken during FY25 have already begun to yield results, as "our weighted average incremental cost of borrowing has reduced from 7.01% last year to 6.75% currently. Total revenue from operation rose 32.46% to Rs 10,311.29 crore from Rs 7,784.29 crore in 2023-24. The growth reflects strong demand for diversified housing and infrastructure products and successful market penetration. Loan book y-o-y grew from Rs 92,654 crore to Rs 1,24,828 crore, recording an increase of nearly 35% over the previous year.

Infinx acquires US firm i3 Verticals for \$96 million

PTI
MUMBAI

City-headquartered Infinx on Wednesday said it has acquired Nasdaq-listed i3 Verticals' healthcare revenue cycle management business for USD 96 million. The 2012-founded Infinx is aiming to strengthen presence in the healthcare revenue cycle management (RCM) space and expand footprint into new customer segments like academic medical centers and other large provider groups through the acquisition, as per a company statement.

Deal volumes remain resilient in Apr at \$2.1 billion: Grant Thornton report

IANs
NEW DELHI

The private equity (PE) landscape in April remained steady in terms of deal volume, clocking 139 transactions - a marginal 1 per cent rise - continuing its consistent monthly trend between 130 to 140 deals, a report showed on Wednesday.

While no billion-dollar deals were recorded this month - unlike the two in the previous month - investor appetite remained resilient, with six high-value transactions (ranging between \$100

Mkts vs Missiles: Op Sindoor Tests Stock Market Nerves

Teji Mandi



In a significant military development, India's Armed Forces launched 'Operation Sindoor' late Tuesday, targeting terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and PoK. The operation has sparked global attention — politically and financially — raising questions about its impact on the markets. This article examines how markets have historically responded to India's military strikes and looks at how they are reacting to the latest developments under Operation Sindoor.

What's Happening?

In retaliation to the deadly Pahalgam attack on April 22 — which claimed 26 lives (25 Indian citizens and one Nepali) — the Indian Armed Forces initiated Operation Sindoor on Tuesday night. The mission targeted terror camps located in Pakistan and PoK. According to the Ministry of Defence, the targeted sites were being used to plan and execute attacks against India. Nine locations were hit in total. The ministry clarified that no Pakistani military bases were involved, with India deliberately choosing its targets to exercise strategic restraint.

How is Today's Market Reacting?

Indian equity benchmarks

Nifty50 and BSE Sensex opened marginally lower on Wednesday (May 07), defying expectations of a sharper decline after Operation Sindoor. The markets, however, quickly recovered and touched a high of 24,301.20, down 78.49 points or 0.32%, while the BSE Sensex is at 80,392.19, down 248.88 points or 0.31%. The pullback after hitting the day's high reflects a cautious stance among investors.

What's Next?

As Indian markets trend lower and the India VIX continues to climb, investor sentiment remains cautious. The next move will depend largely on Pakistan's response. According to LiveMint, Kranthi Bathini of WealthMills Securities noted that while Indian equities may react sharply in the short term, a gradual recovery is likely — provided the situation doesn't escalate. A prolonged or widened conflict could dent investor confidence. Market expert Ajay Bagga also pointed out that the geopolitical risk to Indian markets has now materialised with the strikes.

Teji Mandi (TM Investment Technologies Pvt Ltd) is a SEBI registered Research Analyst (RA). Information in this article should not be construed as investment advice. Please visit www.tejimandi.com to know more.

DABUR INDIA POSTS ₹313 CR PAT IN Q4

PTI
NEW DELHI

Dabur India on Wednesday reported an 8.35 per cent decline in consolidated net profit at Rs 312.73 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2025 impacted by higher expenses in a challenging demand environment.

The company had posted a profit of Rs 341.22 crore in the same quarter previous fiscal, Dabur India said in a regulatory filing. Revenue from operations in the quarter under review stood at Rs 2,830.14 crore as against Rs 2,814.64 crore in the year-ago period, it added. Total expenses were higher at Rs 2,559.39 crore as compared to Rs 2,490.43 crore. FMCG demand trends

FMCG demand trends remained subdued during the fourth quarter and full year 2024-25

remained subdued during the fourth quarter and full year 2024-25. Revenue for the full year 2024-25 stood at Rs 12,563 crore, the company said.

"Despite facing some pressures in the India business, our international business enabled us to successfully navigate the complex external environment. Our International Business achieved 19% constant currency growth in the fourth quarter and 17% during the full year," Dabur India CEO Mohit Malhotra said.



million and \$999 million) totalling \$2.1 billion, according to the Grant Thornton Bharat Dealtracker.

The standout deal was Warburg Pincus and Abu Dhabi Investment Authority's \$862 million investment in IDFC FIRST Bank.

"Deal volumes remained resilient, but the sharp dip in both M&A and PE values

reflects growing investor caution on taking large bets. While cross border deals slowed down, domestic mergers and acquisitions (M&A) and PE/VC activity is stable," said Shanthi Vijetha, Partner, Growth at Grant Thornton Bharat.

PE/VCs are focusing on early-stage investments so that they can shape financial performance and drive growth. "India's ability to navigate the US tariff conundrum and the response to the recent terror attacks will be critical to drive deal activity in 2025," she mentioned.

GIC Re CSR initiative improves school infra in Thane district

As part of its CSR initiative, GIC Re, in collaboration with the VMM Foundation (Virangna Mahila Mandal), has significantly contributed to the improvement of school infrastructure by constructing new toilet facilities in five schools across the Shapur region of Thane district. The beneficiary schools are located in the villages of Kinavali, Mugaon, Naryangaon, Veloli, and Umbrai. This initiative is a crucial step towards enhancing hygiene and sanitation standards, ensuring a healthier and safer learning environment for students.



Representatives from GIC Re and the VMM Foundation reaffirmed their commitment to creating lasting impact through public-private partnerships focused on strengthening rural infrastructure and supporting inclusive education.

Suchita Bhikane is MSETCL ED (HR)

Additional Collector Suchita Bhikane has been appointed as Executive Director (HR) of Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Company Ltd (MSETCL). Bhikane was earlier working as deputy commissioner (Land Acquisition) in Konkan Bhavan. Bhikane has done her graduation from Agricultural College, Pune and post-graduation from Konkan Agricultural University, Dapoli. She has also obtained a law degree (LLB). Thereafter, in 2010, she joined the government service directly as Deputy Collector through Maharashtra Public Service Commission examination. She has



worked as a Deputy Collector in the Employment Guarantee Scheme in Sangli for four years. She has worked as Deputy Collector (Land Acquisition and Rehabilitation) in Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority for four and a half years. She has also worked as Managing Director in Annasaheb Patil Arthik Magas Vikas Mahamandal

DII / FPI trading activity			
	BUY VALUE	SELL VALUE	NET VALUE
DII	13,168.99	10,790.50	2,378.49
FII / FPI	16,371.71	13,785.85	2,585.86

All figures in ₹ crores

I always knew I was going to be rich. I don't think I ever doubted it for a minute.

Warren Buffett



Mkts close higher despite profit-booking



Motilal Oswal Team

MUMBAI

Nifty Index opened negative by around 150 points on account of geopolitical concerns but witnessed a sharp uptick to 24450 zones in the first tick. It was followed by volatility and cool off in the first hour itself but again saw a gradual up move throughout the session. It formed a bullish candle on daily frame and managed to close above 24400 marks. However it has started to form lower highs from the last three sessions and even though support based buying is intact, the index is lacking follow up at higher zones for it to sustain. Now it has to hold above 24400 zones for strength to regain towards 24650 then 24750 zones while supports can be seen at 24200 then 24050 zones.

On option front, Maximum Call OI is at 24400 then 25000 strike while Maximum Put OI is at 24300 then 24400 strike. Call writing is seen at 24400 then 24850 strike while Put writing is seen at 24300 then 24350 strike.

Option data suggests a broader trading range in between 23800 to 24800 zones while an immediate range between 24100 to 24600 levels.

The S&P BSE Sensex Index opened on a negative note but quickly recovered from the initial decline. The index faced resistance near 80800

marks where it encountered sudden profit booking. In the latter part of the session, the Sensex traded sideways within a range of approximately 300 points but managed to close with gains of around 100 points. On the daily chart it formed a bullish candle following a gap down opening, indicating buying interest at lower levels. Now if it manages to hold above 80500 zones then it can move higher towards 81000 then 81300 levels else weakness could be seen towards 80500 and 80200 levels.

Bank Nifty Index opened marginally lower near 54000 zones but remained quite volatile in a wider range of 500 points in the initial hour of the session. However gradual recovery was seen from lower levels towards 54700 zones in the latter part of the day and finally it closed with gains of around 340 points near 54600 levels. It formed a Bullish candle on daily scale as buying interest is visible at lower levels and it took support near its 20 DEMA. Now it has to hold above 54250 zones for a bounce towards 55000 then 55250 levels while on the downside support is seen at 54250 then 54000 zones.

Nifty future closed positive with gains of 0.17% at 24472 levels. Positive setup seen in Paytm, PEL, BSE, IIFL, Bharat Forge, Aarti Industries, Motherson, Tata Motors, SRF, AB Capital, Maruti, APL Apollo and KPIT Tech.

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DATA SOURCE: CAPITALINE



Techno Electric:

● Techno Electric & Engineering Company Ltd. (TEECL), has officially launched Techno Digital Infra Pvt Ltd, its wholly-owned digital infrastructure arm. Backed by an ambitious investment plan of USD 1 billion, Techno Digital plans an integrated network of hyperscale and edge data centers targeting a cumulative capacity of 250 MW spread across the country. This strategic move marks a transformative leap to revolutionize India's digital economy, aligned with the Government of India's flagship programme, Digital India.

Solex Energy:

● Solex Energy announced that it has won a major order from KPI Green Energy Limited, a leading Renewable Power Producer and EPC company. As part of this landmark agreement, Solex Energy will supply 310 MW of state-of-the-art N-Type TOPCon 615Wp Glass-to-Glass (G12R) Solar PV Modules, valued at Rs 451.41 crore and the deliveries for the same will commence from Sept'25. The modules will be used in KPI Green Energy's GUVNL Projects, part of their own Independent Power Producer (IPP) portfolio.

Jindal Drilling:

● Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) has issued

Notification of Award to Jindal Drilling for deployment of rig Jindal Explorer on its subsequent contract for a period of 3 years at Effective Day Rate (EDR) of USD 35,138.71. The current contract of Rig Jindal Explorer with ONGC is expected to conclude in Q1FY26 and subsequent contract is expected to commence in Q3FY26.

Lupin:

● Lupin announced that it has launched Eslicarbazepine Acetate Tablets, 200 mg, 400 mg, 600 mg, and 800 mg, following the approval of its Abbreviated New Drug Application (ANDA) from the USFDA. Lupin is one of the first ANDA applicants and is eligible for 180 days of shared generic exclusivity.

Tata Chemicals:

● Tata Chemicals Ltd on Wednesday reported a consolidated net loss from continuing operations at Rs 67 crore for the quarter ended March. Its net loss stood at Rs 818 crore in the year-ago period. Total income fell marginally to Rs 3,551 crore in the fourth quarter of the last fiscal from Rs 3,589 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year, according to a regulatory filing.

MRF:

Tyre maker MRF Ltd on Wednesday reported 29.28 per cent increase in consolidated net profit from continuing operations at Rs 512.11 crore for March quarter FY25, riding on higher sales. The company had earned a net profit from continuing operations of Rs 396.11 crore in the year-ago period, MRF said in a regulatory filing. Revenue from operations in the quarter under review stood at Rs 7,074.82 crore as against Rs 6,349.36 crore in the year-ago period, it added.

Hot stocks

Company Name	5/6/2025	7 DSMA	21 DSMA	50DSMA	250 DSMA	BSE 1 Year High Price	Pulscore
Tata Consumer	1154.80	1159.99	1121.16	1036.65	1063.25	1247.39	100
Dr Reddy's Labs	1159.90	1178.26	1156.12	1153.46	1259.63	1420.20	100
Axis Bank	1161.00	1178.10	1147.01	1083.91	1138.77	1338.55	100
Cyient	1161.90	1185.34	1189.97	1251.45	1706.80	2156.35	100
Clean Science	1173.00	1182.51	1187.25	1214.31	1401.97	1690.00	100
Global Health	1186.80	1198.74	1233.47	1216.31	1158.92	1443.95	100
Symphony	1190.55	1169.47	1154.38	1146.51	1308.99	1878.95	100
Whirlpool India	1194.80	1224.14	1135.44	1040.26	1701.87	2450.00	100
Bata India	1205.65	1208.09	1218.20	1235.11	1374.41	1632.00	100
Lloyds Metals	1209.55	1222.92	1246.30	1199.10	981.84	1477.50	100
Aurobindo Pharm	1211.15	1224.24	1174.95	1146.28	1288.12	1592.55	100
Voltas	1229.65	1236.24	1281.82	1337.55	1550.83	1946.20	100
Balaji Amines	1235.40	1275.66	1269.26	1287.05	1941.48	2550.15	100
KPIT Technologi.	1240.30	1242.53	1188.10	1245.06	1504.31	1928.75	100
Deepak Fertiliz.	1243.50	1285.75	1238.88	1143.01	1022.82	1443.35	100
Godrej Consumer	1250.90	1260.21	1228.99	1132.29	1268.69	1541.30	100
Sobha	1265.50	1291.81	1231.97	1219.23	1597.55	2178.74	100
Max Financial	1268.25	1287.98	1221.45	1132.81	1099.72	1324.70	100
Macrotech Devel.	1297.95	1314.61	1251.43	1196.91	1273.49	1648.00	100
Astral	1299.55	1340.13	1329.22	1322.88	1796.72	2453.95	100
Adani Ports	1320.35	1252.95	1214.77	1164.71	1310.67	1607.95	100
Prestige Estates	1330.70	1344.10	1241.02	1205.17	1589.98	2072.75	100
Rainbow Child.	1358.70	1368.99	1430.42	1356.28	1379.18	1708.50	100
Mahanagar Gas	1377.65	1346.52	1323.11	1319.48	1475.04	1988.55	100
Ipca Labs.	1382.00	1395.69	1396.72	1395.76	1418.05	1757.65	100
Glenmark Pharma	1405.15	1388.41	1408.48	1408.31	1462.87	1830.05	100
Gland Pharma	1414.20	1416.19	1442.45	1517.70	1738.94	2220.95	100
Reliance Industr	1420.55	1392.97	1292.86	1260.15	1363.69	1608.95	100
ICICI Bank	1431.65	1425.29	1377.91	1313.05	1246.85	1446.25	100
ERIS Lifescience	1456.70	1472.70	1411.29	1339.42	1244.34	1593.00	100
Torrent Power	1458.70	1515.96	1548.54	1438.17	1568.91	2037.35	100
Cochin Shipyard	1481.40	1531.16	1463.89	1388.20	1706.82	2977.10	100
Tech Mahindra	1496.55	1486.85	1392.09	1457.84	1552.76	1807.40	100
Phoenix Mills	1498.45	1592.28	1595.11	1593.14	1665.96	2068.15	100
J B Chemicals & Cipla	1503.45	1574.84	1582.13	1597.45	1778.30	2029.00	100
	1501.70	1535.72	1496.60	1479.65	1501.63	1702.00	100

Upwardly & Downwardly Cos

Company Name	4/29/2025	5/7/2025	Days	Gain/Loss %	Per Day Average
CEAT	3061.40	3630.00	5	18.57	113.72
Schaeffler India	3280.70	3625.55	5	10.51	68.97
Muthoot Finance	2150.95	2307.05	5	7.26	31.22
M & M	2909.20	3119.85	5	7.24	42.13
ICICI Securities	837.30	895.70	5	6.97	11.68

Top gainers (value)

Company Name	5/6/2025	5/7/2025	Chg in ₹	% chg
MRF	134964.41	140428.70	5464.29	4.05
Page Industries	45696.55	46355.60	659.05	1.44
Bosch	29894.70	30501.80	607.10	2.03
LMW	15841.65	16243.20	401.55	2.53
Hitachi Energy	14377.75	14741.20	363.45	2.53
ZF Commercial	12066.35	12403.35	337.00	2.79
Honeywell Auto	34833.05	35144.50	311.45	0.89
Mah. Scooters	11058.70	11279.80	221.10	2.00
Kaynes Tech	5623.40	5843.45	220.05	3.91
V-Mart Retail	3209.05	3403.25	194.20	6.05
Bajaj Finance	8797.10	8985.50	188.40	2.14
Apar Inds.	5580.35	5761.70	181.35	3.25
Coroforge	7420.10	7598.45	178.35	2.40
Oracle Fin.Serv.	8377.00	8546.00	169.00	2.02
Endurance Tech.	1870.10	2023.70	153.60	8.21
SRF	2924.85	3053.25	128.40	4.39
Amber Enterp.	5865.15	5987.55	122.40	2.09
Abbott India	30145.75	30259.75	114.00	0.38
KEI Industries	3193.35	3294.85	101.50	3.18
Shree Cement	29471.70	29565.65	93.95	0.32
Cera Sanitary.	5315.65	5406.55	90.90	1.71
Solar Industries	13197.05	13287.50	90.45	0.69
HDFC AMC	4338.05	4426.55	88.50	2.04
K P R Mill Ltd	1019.10	1011.60	82.50	8.10
Privi Speci.	1880.00	1962.00	82.00	4.36
CCL Products	694.95	776.00	81.05	11.66
Persistent Sys	5420.00	5498.15	78.15	1.44
Angel One	2296.75	2372.90	76.15	3.32
Aarti Drugs	349.75	419.70	69.95	20.00
Piramal Enterp.	964.75	1033.95	69.20	7.17
Timken India	2635.90	2704.40	68.50	2.60
Indiamart Inter.	2204.35	2272.60	68.25	3.10
A B B	5333.00	5399.50	66.50	1.25
Multi Comm. Exc.	5998.85	6065.15	66.30	1.11
Mankind Pharma	2366.90	2430.05	63.15	2.67
Muthoot Finance	2246.05	2307.05	61.00	2.72
Kama Holdings	2632.10	2691.20	59.10	2.25
One 97	815.30	873.85	58.55	7.18
Tata Elxsi	5700.50	5758.50	58.00	1.02
Bharat Forge	1085.10	1140.45	55.35	5.10
Bajaj Holdings	11843.05	11898.35	55.30	0.47
CRISIL	4647.20	4702.35	55.15	1.19
Navin Fluor.Intl.	4619.75	4674.85	55.10	1.19
CEAT	3576.25	3630.00	53.75	1.50
Ratnamani Metals	2568.65	2622.10	53.45	2.08
Cummins India	2790.85	2844.15	53.30	1.91

Top losers (value)

Company Name	5/6/2025	5/7/2025	Chg in ₹	% chg
Godfrey Phillips	8673.35	8422.65	-250.70	-2.89
P & G Hygiene	14135.20	13919.55	-215.65	-1.53
Radico Dock	2968.60	2817.45	-151.15	-5.09
Craftsman Auto	4750.75	4643.60	-107.15	-2.26
Bajaj Auto	7942.80	7846.80	-96.00	-1.21
Radico Khaitan	2534.00	2448.05	-85.95	-3.39
Asian Paints	2417.95	2332.65	-85.30	-3.53
Bharat Dynamics	1527.65	1448.30	-79.35	-5.19
Bombay Burmah	1835.40	1774.30	-61.10	-3.33
3M India	29578.90	29524.25	-54.65	-0.18
Esab India	4650.85	4600.20	-50.65	-1.09
J K Cements	5100.10	5055.90	-44.20	-0.87
Britannia Inds.	5391.15	5348.75	-42.40	-0.79
Fine Organic	4158.00	4116.70	-41.30	-0.99
Data Pattern	2199.70	2161.95	-37.75	-1.72
Sun Pharma.Inds.	1818.75	1781.35	-37.40	-2.06
Hind.Aeronautics	4507.10	4469.90	-37.20	-0.83
Suven Pharma	1118.50	1081.40	-37.10	-3.32
UltraTech Cem.	11692.55	11656.50	-36.05	-0.31
Adani Energy Sol	907.20	871.35	-35.85	-3.95
Interglobe Aviat	5323.00	5291.15	-31.85	-0.60
Grasim Inds	2729.00	2697.85	-31.15	-1.14
Eicher Motors	5510.85	5485.00	-25.85	-0.47
Linde India	6206.80	6181.10	-25.70	-0.41
Apollo Hospitals	7004.30	6978.90	-25.40	-0.36
Grindwell Norton	1571.70	1548.75	-22.95	-1.46
Cochin Shipyard	1481.40	1459.40	-22.00	-1.49
Polyvac India	5907.65	5885.85	-21.80	-0.37
Pidilite Inds.	3003.00	2981.70	-21.30	-0.71
Carborundum Uni	981.75	961.65	-20.10	-2.05
Akzo Nobel	3494.80	3475.45	-19.35	-0.55
Krishna Institu.	663.25	644.25	-19.00	-2.86
Patanjali Foods	1851.20	1832.80	-18.40	-0.99
Nestle India	2355.00	2336.85	-18.15	-0.77
Ipca Labs.	1382.00	1364.05	-17.95	-1.30
Sanofi India	5829.95	5812.15	-17.80	-0.31
JBM Auto	683.40	666.00	-17.40	-2.55
Natco Pharma	830.20	813.35	-16.85	-2.03
Chola Financial	1880.70	1864.05	-16.65	-0.89
Chambal Fert.	725.50	709.00	-16.50	-2.27
HCL Technologies	1579.10	1562.65	-16.45	-1.04
Sun TV Network	612.70	597.10	-15.60	-2.55
baj Technol	4099.35	4083.90	-15.45	-0.38
Astrazeneca Phar	8201.30	8186.40	-14.90	-0.18
Reliance Industr	1420.55	1406.00	-14.55	-1.02
GE Shipping Co	887.85	873.40	-14.45	-1.63

Stock Ideas

TIRUMALCHM - Technical call of the day

After making double bottom, the stock attempted to bounce back from the support levels as indicated through trendline on daily charts. The RSI indicator is also indicating a possible formation of positive RSI divergence suggesting bullish implications.



Top gainers (%)

Company Name	5/6/2025	5/7/202
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corporate gallery

Allen Indore's Riddhesh will represent India in IPhO final



Once again Allen Career Institute students have been selected in the international Olympiad to bring pride to the country. Allen Career Institute Indore's Center Head Kamal Sharma said that the Indian team for the 55th International Physics Olympiad (IPhO) has been announced. Allen Indore's student Riddhesh is also included in the four-member team. Cake was cut at Allen Indore and Riddhesh was wished good luck for the IPhO final to be held in France between 18 and 24 July.

Allen's Director Dr. Brajesh Maheshwari said that four students are from Allen in the five-member Indian team announced for the 55th International Physics Olympiad (IPhO) to be held in France. It includes Aagam Shah, Kanishk Jain, Rajit Gupta and Riddhesh Bendale. All of them are Allen's classroom students.

This exam is conducted in four stages. In the first stage, National Standard Examination in Physics (NSEP), 135 Allen students were selected. Then in the second stage, Indian National Physics Olympiad (INPhO), 13 Allen students were selected. After the third stage, Orientation cum Selection Camp (OCSC), 4 Allen students were selected to represent India. The fourth stage is IPhO Final, in which teams from more than 80 countries will participate.

13 Employees Of WR Felicitated With General Manager's Safety Award



Ashok Kumar Misra - General Manager of Western Railway felicitated 13 employees at WR Headquarters, Mumbai for their outstanding work which resulted in safe train working. These employees were awarded in appreciation of their alertness in duty and contribution towards averting untoward incidents, during the month of February and March, 2025 and thereby ensuring the safety of train operations. Out of the 13 employees, 05 are from Vadodra Division, 03 are from Mumbai Central Division, 01 is from Ahmedabad Division, while 02 each are from Bhavnagar and Ratlam Divisions. According to a press release issued by Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, Vineet Abhishek, Misra appreciated the alertness of the staff who were being awarded and mentioned that they are exemplary role models for everyone to emulate. The employees showed their great zeal and commitment towards safe running of trains in various areas of safety such as detection of rail & track fracture, brake binding or dangling objects in passing train, application of emergency brakes to save untoward incidents, save human life, extinguishing the smoke detected in coaches, etc.

WR records 2nd Best Ever Monthly Performance in last five years



In order to ensure hassle-free, comfortable travel & better services to all bonafide passengers over Western Railway, intensive ticket checking drives are being carried out continuously over Mumbai suburban

local services, Mail/Express as well as passenger trains & holiday special trains so as to curb the menace of ticketless/irregular passengers. The highly motivated ticket checking team under the supervision of senior commercial officers of Western Railway organized several ticket checking drives in the month of April 2025, thereby recovering an amount to the tune of Rs. 21.89 Crore, which also includes



Rs. 6 Cr from Mumbai Suburban section. According to a press release issued by Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, Vineet Abhishek during the month of April 2025, an amount of Rs. ₹21.89 crore was recovered through detection of 3.10 lakh ticketless/irregular passengers, including unbooked luggage cases. Also, in the month of April, WR realized fines amounting to Rs. 6 crore through detection of more than 1 Lakh cases over Mumbai Suburban section. To prevent unauthorized entry in AC local trains, frequent surprise ticket checking drives are also being carried out. As a result of these drives more than 6,000 unauthorized passengers have been penalized in April 2025 and Rs.20.24 lakhs collected in fines.

Western Railway appeals to the general public to travel with proper and valid tickets.

whispersinthecorridors

Dr Suresh Mehrotra



Leadership dispute in Mahagathbandhan?



The Mahagathbandhan alliance, preparing for the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections, has ramped up its coordination. In a notable development, leaders from all alliance partners—including the Congress, RJD, and Left parties—are working together more visibly and actively than before. For the first time, district-level leaders from these alliance parties are being brought under one platform to emphasize the importance of unity and coordination. Despite these moves toward unity, a major sticking point remains unresolved: the question of projecting RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav as the alliance's chief ministerial face. The Congress party's reluctance to endorse Tejashwi for the top post has stalled a unanimous announcement on leadership. Nevertheless, RJD strategists are actively engaging with senior Congress leaders in Delhi in an attempt to break the deadlock.

M K Mohapatra appointed as Ambassador to Romania

Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, presently Ambassador of India to Guatemala, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Romania. He is a 2000 batch IFS officer.



Kaushal Raj Sharma likely to be PS to Delhi CM

If sources are to be believed Kaushal Raj Sharma could be PS of Delhi CM Rekha Gupta. Sources said that Sharma has been transferred from UP to Delhi segment of AGMUT cadre for a period of three years with a purpose. He is a 2006 batch IAS officer.

Anish Prasad appointed as IG, BSF

Anish Prasad presently working as Executive Director, Vigilance, Railway Board, has been appointed as IG, BSF on lateral deputation basis up to his remaining deputation tenure i.e. June 21, 2026. He is a 2003 batch IPS officer of Tripura cadre.

Sanjaya Kumar Satapathy appointed as Director (HR), AWEIL

Sanjaya Kumar Satapathy, Chief Human Resource Officer, Tata Steel Technical Services Ltd, has been appointed as Director (Human Resources), Advanced Weapons & Equipment India Limited.

IAS Dr. Waghmare Prasad Krishna Guiding Lohardaga's Youth in the Right Direction with Free Coaching, Sports, and Digital Literacy Program (Jharkhand)

IAS Dr Waghmare Prasad Krishna is a 2011 Batch Officer of Jharkhand cadre and is currently posted as Deputy Commissioner of Lohardaga, Jharkhand—a Naxal affected District. His vision for the district is to steer the youth in the right direction and prepare them for a brighter future.

"We want to push the district's youth towards meaningful career paths so that they don't face crises or take the wrong path" he says. Under Dr. Krishna's leadership, a multifaceted development approach is being implemented for youth, where all key aspects of development are being taken care of—like sports, education, digital literacy, and more. What makes these efforts truly stand out is that they are being provided entirely free of cost. "All of this is completely free and exclusively for students who cannot afford such facilities," Dr. Krishna emphasized. In the field of sports, training centers have been established across the district. "We have also engaged professional coaches for cricket, football, wrestling, and other sports," he adds. For academically inclined students, aspiring to become doctors or engineers, free NEET and JEE coaching has been started. Further recognising the need to provide quiet, stable and focused environment for the youth, a library has been established in the district dedicated to the preparation of competitive exams. To personally motivate them, Dr. Krishna explained the initiative taken by all the officers in the district: "All of our officers here, who have cleared these exams, take out time to meet the students and guide them." Additionally to enhance digital literacy, a computer training program has been started equipping individuals with much needed skills in today's world. "This is a Central Government prescribed course for a period of three months, somewhat like a foundation course" he explained. Through these simple yet powerful initiatives, Dr. Krishna is guiding the youth toward a brighter, more fulfilling future—one that is set to leave a lasting impact.



Why appointment of new Chairperson, UPSC delayed?

It has been more than one year! The Government of India is yet to fill the vacancy of Chairperson, Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). The senior-most Member is generally appointed the Chairperson. If sources are to be believed, some lobby is reportedly active in stalling the order. Which lobby is interested?



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JUSTICE IS SERVED.
INDIAN ARMY



Long live Mother India! (Bharat Mata Ki Jai).

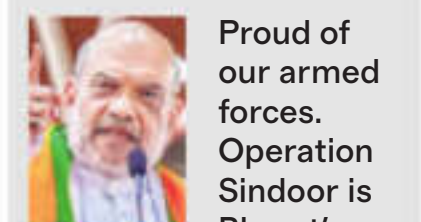
Through Operation Sindoor, India has used its 'right to respond' to the attack on its soil, and the armed forces scripted history by acting with precision, precaution and compassion to destroy the camps used to train terrorists in Pakistan and PoK.

Rajnath Singh,
Defence Minister



The world must show zero tolerance for terrorism.

S Jaishankar,
External Affairs Minister



Proud of our armed forces. Operation Sindoor is Bharat's response to the brutal killing of our innocent brothers in Pahalgam.

Amit Shah,
Home Minister



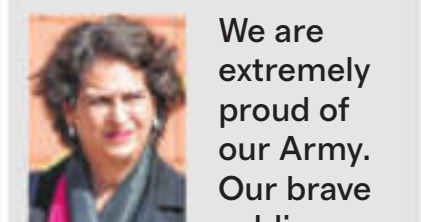
We are extremely proud of our Indian Armed Forces who have struck terror camps in Pakistan and PoK. We applaud their resolute resolve and courage. Since the day of the Pahalgam terror attack, the Congress has categorically stood with the armed forces and the government to take any decisive action against cross-border terror.

Mallikarjun Kharge,
Congress boss



Proud of our Armed Forces. Jai Hind!

Rahul Gandhi,
Congress leader



We are extremely proud of our Army. Our brave soldiers protect our freedom and integrity. May God protect them and give them immense courage to face challenges with patience and bravery. Jai Hind.

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra,
Congress leader



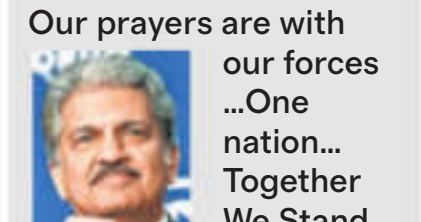
The nation stands united against terrorism. We are extremely proud of the country's defence forces. The courage and valour of the Indian Army made the whole country proud. We all have unwavering faith and pride in the leadership of PM Modi. Jai Hind.

Nitish Kumar,
Bihar Chief Minister



Fearless in unity. Boundless in strength. India's shield is her people. There's no room for terrorism in this world. We're ONE TEAM! Jai Hind.

Sachin Tendulkar,
Cricketer



Our prayers are with our forces ...One nation... Together We Stand.

Anand Mahindra,
Industrialist

'JEM' OF AN ATTACK | Jaish chief acknowledges Indian missile strike on its headquarters in Bahawalpur also killed four aides

MASOOD AZHAR: 10 OF MY FAMILY DEAD

M Zulqarnain
LAHORE / NEW DELHI

Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) chief Maulana Masood Azhar acknowledged on Wednesday that 10 members of his family and four close associates were killed in India's missile attack on the outfit's headquarters in Bahawalpur.

A statement attributed to Azhar said those killed in the attack on Jamia Masjid Subhan Allah in Bahawalpur included the JeM chief's elder sister and her husband, a nephew and his wife, another niece, and five children from his extended family.

The statement further mentioned that the attack also claimed the lives of one of Azhar's close associates and his mother, along with two other close companions. "This act of brutality has broken all boundaries. There should be no expectation of mercy now," it added.

Bahawalpur became the hub of the JeM after the release of Azhar in exchange for the hijacked passengers of IC-814 in 1999. In May 2019, the UN designated Azhar a "global terrorist" after China lifted its hold on a proposal to blacklist the JeM chief, a decade after New Delhi approached the world body for the first time on the issue.

The elusive Azhar, who has not been seen in public since April 2019, is believed to be hiding in a "safe place" in Bahawalpur.

The group has been invol-



JeM chief's elder sister and her husband, a nephew and his wife, another niece, and 5 children from his extended family died in the attack

ed terror attacks in India, including the Parliament attack in 2001, the attack on the Jammu and Kashmir assembly in 2000, the strike on the IAF base in Pathankot in 2016 and the Pulwama suicide bombing in 2019. —PTI

WHAT'S IN PAK ARSENAL?

Pakistan possesses a wide range of missiles capable of striking targets at various distances. FPJ takes a close look...

Shaheen Short-Range Missiles: Shaheen-I: Range of 750 km, Shaheen-IA: 900 km and Shaheen-II: 1000 km. **Medium-Range Ballistic Missiles:** Shaheen-III: 2,500 km and Shaheen-III: 2,750 km

Ghauri-I has a range of 1,500 km, while Ghauri-II can strike targets between 2,000–2,300 km. Ababeel missile is part of the arsenal, with a range of 2,200 km and capable of delivering multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles.

Other powerful systems include the Hatf missile series (Hatf I to VIII),

cruise missiles, anti-tank guided missiles, and tactical rockets such as Fatah-I, II, III.

Short-range ballistic missiles like Nasr, Ghaznavi, and Abdali also bolster Pakistan's battlefield capabilities. Moreover, the military possesses anti-radiation missiles sourced from China and Brazil.

Armored Corps: Tanks from Pakistan, China & Ukraine

Pak's Armored Corps is equipped with advanced tanks developed through local and international collaborations:

VT4 MBT: A third-generation tank made in China.

Al-Khalid: Co-produced by Pakistan and China, equipped with a smooth-bore gun.

Al-Zarrar: Upgraded version of Chinese Type 59 tank.

NOTORIOUS NINE

1 Markaz Subhan Allah, Bahawalpur (Punjab, Pakistan) : Headquarters of JeM, this facility played a central role in planning terror attacks, including the Pulwama bombing on February 14, 2019. The attackers received training at this camp.

2 Markaz Taiba, Muridke (Sheikhupura, Punjab, Pakistan) : Founded in 2000, this is the main training and ideological centre of LeT, located in Nangal Sahdan, Muridke.

3 Sarjal / Tehra Kalan Facility (Narowal, Punjab, Pakistan): A primary JeM launch site for infiltrating terrorists into Jammu & Kashmir. Hidden within a Primary Health Centre in Tehra Kalan village, it was designed to conceal its true purpose.

4 Mehmoona Joya Facility, Sialkot (Punjab, Pakistan): Operated by Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), this site is near Kotli Bhutta Government Hospital in Head Marala, Sialkot. Supported by Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), the facility was covertly established within government premises along the International Border and Line of Control (LoC).

5 Markaz Ahle Hadith, Barnala (Bhimber, PoK) A strategic LeT facility used for infiltration into the Poonch–Rajouri–Reasi sector. Located on the outskirts of Barnala on Kote Jamel Road, it lies just 500 metres from Barnala town.

6 Markaz Abbas, Kotli (PoK) A JeM centre named after Hazrat Abbas Bin Abdul Mutalib, situated in Mohalla Roli near the Bypass Road in Kotli. It is located approximately 2 km southeast of the Kotli military camp.

7 Maskar Raheel Shahid, Kotli District (PoK) An old HM camp located 2.5 km from Mahuli Puli on the Mirpur–Kotli Road. Tucked away in the hills and accessible only by a dirt track, it includes barracks, arms storage rooms, offices, and residential quarters for terrorists.

8 Shawai Nallah Camp, Muzaffarabad (PoK) A key LeT facility used for the recruitment, registration, and training of militants. It has been active since the early 2000s.

9 Markaz Syedna Bilal, Muzaffarabad (PoK) The main JeM centre in PoK, located opposite the Red Fort in Muzaffarabad. This facility serves as a transit camp for JeM terrorists before their launch into Jammu & Kashmir. At any given time, 50–100 cadres reside in this facility. India has avenged the Pahalgam massacre.



Pakistan PM: Our Army was ready for Indian attack



Sajjad Hussain
ISLAMABAD / NEW DELHI

Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif** said the Pakistan Army was ready for an Indian attack, lauding his forces for the "swift response".

Addressing a session of Parliament amid escalated tensions between the two countries, Shehbaz claimed the Pakistan armed forces destroyed 5 Indian jets. He, however, did not provide any evidence in support of his claim. "Last night, 80 Indian aircraft were part of the offensive, but Pakistan's air defence effectively neutralised the threat," he claimed.

The PM lauded the Pakistan Air Force and its chief "for the swift response", saying the armed forces had prior intelligence about India's plans. "We shot down 5 enemy jets, including Rafales, and also downed two Indian drones," he claimed, without providing any evidence to back up his claims.

Meanwhile, Pak Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said that Islamabad is "trying to avoid" a full-fledged war, hours after India carried out a military strike. —PTI

Pak blocks 16 Indian channels

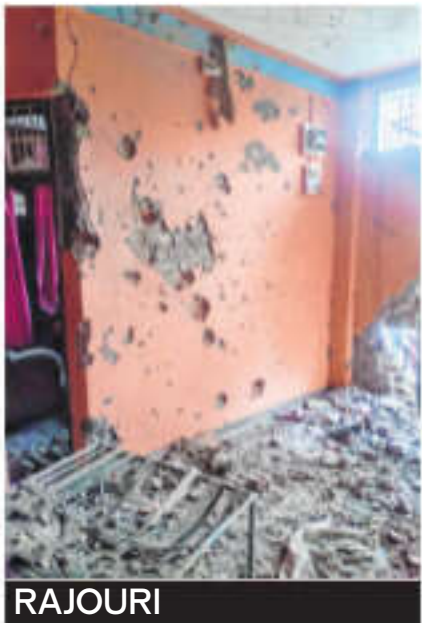
Islamabad: Pakistani authorities have blocked 16 Indian YouTube news channels, 31 YouTube links, and 32 websites in view of the prevailing regional situation. The move is part of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority's continued efforts to ensure the responsible use of digital platforms, officials said. The action of blocking 16 Indian YouTube news channels, 31 YouTube links, and 32 websites "has been taken in the light of the prevailing regional situation to safeguard national security and protect Pakistan's digital ecosystem," the officials said.

'Civilians targeted'

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said Pakistan has "gone out of its way" to target civilian population in the Union Territory following India's missile strikes targeting terror infrastructure in the neighbouring country.

"As reports are coming, Pakistan has gone out of its way to target the civilian population. So I have taken stock of the situation and we are dealing with the situation as it develops," he said after chairing a review meeting.

The CM said India had gone out of its way to ensure no military and civilian targets were hit in the strikes. "After the inhumane and barbaric murder of 26 innocents in Pahalgam, it was expected India would use its right to respond in an appropriate and proportionate way. The government and defence forces have gone out of the way to ensure no military and civilian



targets were hit in Pakistan. They have only hit terror bases," he added.

Earlier, Abdullah assessed the preparedness of the government along the LoC and border areas. "Held a meeting to assess the security and preparedness along the border/LoC areas. Emphasis laid on safeguarding civilian lives, strengthening infrastructure, and ensuring swift response to emerging challenges."

Unidentified aircraft crashes in Punjab's Bathinda; 1 killed

9 others injured in explosion

Rajesh Moudgil
CHANDIGARH

One farm labourer was killed while 9 villagers were injured when an unidentified aircraft crashed and caught fire in Punjab's Bathinda in early on Wednesday after Indian armed forces carried out Operation Sindoor.

The incident occurred around 2am in a harvested wheat field in village Akalian Kalan, 500 metres from the residential area and 20 km from the district headquarter. Incidentally, the crash site is about 20 km from Bhisiana Air Force station in Bathinda.

Eyewitnesses said they saw an aircraft flying unusually low which moments later crashed into the fields.

Verify before posting, China told

The Indian Embassy in Beijing has cautioned China's state-run tabloid 'Global Times' to verify messages before posting them on social media on Indian military strikes targeting Pakistan's terror infrastructure on Wednesday. "Dear Global Times News, we would recommend you verify your facts and cross-examine your sources before pushing out this kind of disinformation," the Indian Embassy said on X. "Several pro-Pakistan handles are spreading baseless claims in the context of Operation Sindoor, attempting to mislead the public," it said.

Even though people rushed to the spot, the aircraft which had caught fire, exploded moments later killing Govind, a farm labourer, a native of Haryana's Charkhi Dadri district, and injuring at least 9 others. The villagers said shrapnel hit the labourers.

According to unconfirmed reports, they were injured when they tried to go near the burning aircraft and a few of them, including Govind, tried to make videos on phones and

Air raid sirens to blackouts, states hold mock drills

Agencies
NEW DELHI

Mock drills simulating hostile scenarios like air raids, fire emergencies, and search and rescue operations were carried out in states and UTs as part of the nationwide 'Operation Abhyaas'.

The exercise, hours after Operation Sindoor targeted terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and PoK, covered Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, UP, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra, Telangana, Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Assam, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland, Sikkim, Arunachal and Manipur.

In Delhi, PCR vans and fire engines were stationed at multiple locations while there was a heavy deployment of security men and civil defence volunteers. Blaring sirens, residents rushing to safety, injured people being carried away on stretchers — these were the scenes played out at 55 locations in the capital.

In an unprecedented sight in the evening, a 15-minute power blackout was also observed in Lutyens' Delhi. Close to 300 'civil defence districts' in the country with sensitive installations like nuclear plants, military bases, refineries and hydroelectric dams were covered by mock drills on air raid warning sirens, civilian training for a "hostile attack" and cleaning of bunkers and trenches.

In Punjab, mock drills were



The drill covered 300 'civil defence districts' with sensitive installations like N-plants, army bases, refineries and dams

conducted in Ferozepur, Ludhiana, Amritsar, Bathinda, Gurdaspur, Patiala, Pathankot, Barnala and Mohali.

Six Bihar cities saw the drill. Electric supply was suspended for 10 minutes in Patna, Purnea, Katihar, Begusarai, Araria and Kishanganj after a warning siren blared. Officials held security drills at key installations in Tamil Nadu, the Madras Atomic Power Station at Kalpakkam and the Chennai port.

Rehearsals were conducted in Telangana's Hyderabad to test emergency preparedness. Evacuation drills were also conducted by private schools in Kolkata. Assam Police's Home Guard and Civil Defence wing led the drill in association with fire services, health dept, disaster management, BSNL and DIPR.

—Inputs from Dheeraj Kumar

Nari Shakti

Now, our women 'pin them down'

Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar
NEW DELHI

Two highly decorated women officers of the Indian Air Force and the Indian Army were on Tuesday given the all-important role of briefing officers by the Centre for explaining the details of Operation Sindoor to the media.

After Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri briefed the media, the floor was handed over to **Colonel Sophia Qureshi** (R) and **Wing**



Commander Vyomika Singh (L) and who through an audio-video presentation showed how the infrastructure of the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba, Jaish-e-Mohammad

and the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen was dismantled through the strikes on nine of their locations in Pakistan and PoK.

Of the sites targeted, four were of JeM, three of LeT

and two of HuM. By bringing forth the two officers India also demonstrated that it would not let Pakistan sow any seeds of discord within its communities.

The officers picked for the briefing have an exemplary record. Colonel Sophia Qureshi is a decorated officer of the Corps of Signals and the first woman Army officer to lead a contingent in a multinational military exercise.

Wing Commander Vyomika Singh is a helicopter pilot who led rescue

missions. Since receiving permanent commission in the flying branch of Indian Air Force in 2019, she has operated Chetak and Cheetah helicopters in India's most challenging terrains in J&K and the North East. The two officers provided details of the nine targets and the reasons these were picked. The presentation showed how the missile strikes carried out with aircrafts and drones hit the terror infrastructure inside Pakistan and PoK.



ATTACK AFTERMATH | Terrorists will think 100 times before acting, say victims’ relatives

EK CHUTKI SINDOOR: KIN ELATED

Team FPJ

Pahalgam terror attack victim Lt Vinay Narwal’s father, Rajesh Narwal, on Wednesday hailed India’s response and said the Modi government has sent a strong message and now the perpetrators of the April 22 attack “will think 100 times” before repeating such attacks in the future.

“When this (Pahalgam) incident happened, even then you (media) came to my home and asked what I expected from the government. My answer was that I had faith in our government. And today, the government has justified that trust,” Rajesh Narwal told reporters at his residence in Karnal.

“I had said that such a thing (retaliatory strikes) has to be done so that no one dares to do such a cowardly act again...the strikes carried out on the terror targets (in Pak and PoK) will resonate in their minds forever.

Responding to a question on the mission’s name, Rajesh said, “This operation has been aptly named Operation Sindoor.” Earlier, when Vinay Narwal’s mother Asha said, “It is a very good thing that (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi has avenged the (Pahalgam) attack. I am with them (the government), people are with them, and our entire family is with them”.



UTTAR PRADESH

Shubham Dwivedi’s wife Ashanya thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and armed forces for taking “revenge” on her husband’s death.

“I want to thank Prime Minister Modi, ministers and chiefs of armed forces, including Air Force and Army Chief General, for taking revenge for my husband’s death in the Pahalgam terror attack,” said Ashanya.

“Me and my entire family had enough trust in PM Modi and our armed forces, and the way they carried out strikes at terrorist infrastructures in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) has kept our trust alive,” she added.

Channaveerappa said, “The name, ‘Operation Sindoor’ is correct because they have removed the tilak of many women. That’s a good step. Government has done a good job and they have also taken the support of many countries.”

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Father of Syed Adil Hussain Shah, the ponywalla who sacrificed his life while protecting the tourists during the Pahalgam terror attack, said on Wednesday that the military strikes on terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir have avenged his son’s killing.

Shah’s family expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the armed forces for the retaliatory action.

Narendra Modi, Indian Army and the Union government.

KOLKATA

Sarbari, wife of deceased Samir Guha said peace will not prevail till countries supporting terrorism are wiped out of the map. “I will not get back what I have lost. But this attack at least brought some relief. I thank the central government for this mission. I am sure the government will plan further steps to curb this menace,” she said.

Sohini, wife of deceased Bitan Adhikari said no other woman should lose their ‘sindoor’ like the way she lost. “I still believe that my late husband can see and hear us. I am sure his departed soul will be satisfied with this attack. I am grateful to our Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

PATNA

Arvind Kumar Mishra uncle of IB officer Manish Ranjan who was killed in the Pahalgam attack said, “Sacrifices of martyrs did not go in vain. We are thankful to Prime Minister. Indian armed forces have taken a right action against Pakistan. I am proud of our armed forces, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and also of the opposition parties for extending full support to the government.”

–Inputs from Rajesh Moudgil, Biswajeet Banerjee, Aritra Singha, Dheeraj Kumar

MILITARY THEATRE

‘Operation Sindoor’ is the latest among military conflicts between India and Pakistan

First Indo-Pak War (1947)



● Also known as the First Kashmir War, it broke out over the then princely state of Jammu and Kashmir after Independence. It began in October 1947 when Pakistan-backed tribal militias invaded the princely state. After the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to the Indian Union by Maharaja Hari Singh, India sent troops to defend the region, leading to full-scale conflict.

● It continued till January 1949 when a UN-mediated ceasefire was implemented, resulting in the division of Kashmir between India and Pakistan along the Line of Control.

Second Indo-Pak War (1965)



● It broke out on August 5, 1965 over Kashmir when thousands of Pakistani soldiers, disguised as local insurgents, infiltrated the Indian territory across the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir.

● The covert operation, codenamed ‘Operation Gibraltar’ aimed to destabilise the region and provoke local uprisings. India responded by launching a military counter-offensive, which escalated into full-scale combat along the international border.

● The war continued until September 23, 1965, when both sides agreed to a ceasefire, brokered by the erstwhile Soviet Union and the US.

Bangladesh Liberation War (1971)

● It was triggered by Pakistani military’s crackdown on East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and its demand for independence. India entered the war in support of the Bangladeshi independence movement.

● After intense fighting on both the eastern and western fronts, Pakistani forces surrendered on December 16, 1971.

● The war led to the creation of Bangladesh as an independent nation.

Kargil War (1999)



● The high-altitude conflict was fought from May to July after Pakistani troops and terrorists occupied peaks in the Kargil sector of Jammu and Kashmir.

● India launched ‘Operation Vijay’ to reclaim the territory, supported by the Air Force’s ‘Operation Safed Sagar’.

● The war ended on July 26 with India regaining control, a day now marked as ‘Kargil Vijay Diwas’.

Uri Attack (2016)

● It followed a terrorist attack on an Army base in Uri, Jammu and Kashmir, on September 18, 2016, in which 19 soldiers were killed.

● India conducted a surgical strike on September 28-29 across the LoC. The Indian Army targeted multiple terrorist launch pads in PoK, claiming significant casualties among terrorists preparing to infiltrate.

Pulwama attack (2019)



● IAF carried out airstrikes on a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist training camp in Balakot, Pakistan, on February 26, 2019.

● It was in response to the Pulwama terror attack that killed 40 CRPF personnel. Using fighter jets, India targeted the camp deep inside Pakistani territory, marking the first such airstrike since the 1971 war.

PRECISION STRIKE DECODED



SCALP (Storm Shadow)

- 1 It is designed to hit exact targets so as to cause minimal collateral damage to surrounding areas.
- 2 Involves advanced guidance tech, surveillance and targeting capabilities to strike targets with high accuracy, often from long distances.
- 3 GPS, laser, radar or infrared guidance used to attack within a few meters of target. Integrates information received from drones, satellites or radar to identify targets and plan attacks.
- 4 Can be launched from a safe distance, reducing risk to the operator
- 5 Operation Sindoor involved loitering munition. It is a type of precision weapon that hovers over a target area to locate and strike targets, often autonomously or under human control
- 6 Precision-guided munitions, including laser-designated missiles and satellite-guided glide bombs, were used. Missiles were launched from air and land platforms

Weapons used in Op Sindoor

India utilised a suite of high-precision, long-range strike weapons in the operation. Among these were the SCALP cruise missile, the HAMMER precision bomb, and loitering munitions.

SCALP (Storm Shadow)

The SCALP missile, also known as Storm Shadow, is a long-range, air-launched cruise missile with a range exceeding 250 kilometres and designed for deep-strike capabilities.

HAMMER (Highly Agile Modular Munition Extended Range)



The HAMMER smart bomb was used to strike hardened infra such as reinforced bunkers and multi-storey buildings used as training and logistical centres by LeT and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM). The HAMMER is a precision-guided, standoff munition capable of striking targets at ranges of 50-70 km, depending on launch altitude.

Loitering Munitions:



systems hover over target areas and either autonomously or under remote control identify and eliminate threats.

Also known as “kamikaze drones,” loitering munitions were deployed for surveillance, target acquisition, and terminal strike roles. These drone

States ‘wise’: On your mark...

TEAM FPJ

The Uttar Pradesh government has issued a high alert across all 75 districts of the state. DGP Prashant Kumar said that all police forces in the state have been instructed to remain fully armed and vigilant. “UP Police is on maximum alert. All units must be prepared to tackle any situation to ensure public safety. Security around key installations has been tightened, and coordination with defense agencies has been strengthened.

Intelligence networks, including social media surveillance, have been activated to monitor any potential threats. All district control rooms have been instructed to operate in high-alert mode. In view of the evolving security scenario, constant vigilance along the India-Nepal border has also been mandated to prevent any cross-border infiltration or suspicious movement.

In cities such as Lucknow and Kanpur, police have

intensified vehicle checks and deployed additional security personnel in sensitive areas.

The high alert, akin to a red alert in terms of protocol, is a warning system used during serious threats or emergencies. Citizens are advised to remain alert and follow official instructions to ensure safety and order.

Raj shuts two airports

Flight operations from Jodhpur and Jaisalmer airports have been stopped till May 10, while flight operations from Bikaner airport also remain closed on Wednesday. North-Western Railway has cancelled the leave of all its officers and employees and the state government has also directed all the police personnel to report to their headquarters.

Schools in the bordering districts have been shut.

After the air strike, some places witnessed outage throughout the night on Wednesday. Various villages in the border area remained in dark.



BJP members hail ‘Operation Sindoor’, in Pune

Schools shut in Punjab

Schools in several parts of border areas of Punjab, including Pathankot, Amritsar, Fazilka and Ferozepur districts, were closed till the next orders for the students safety after Indian armed forces carried out ‘Op Sindoor’ targeting terror launch pads in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK). Meanwhile, even though some villagers had begun to leave their native villages located on the border districts of Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Ferozepur and Fazilka in the past few days, their numbers swelled on Wednesday.

– Inputs from Biswajeet Banerjee, Manish Godha

Together, we can

Even as the country is celebrating India’s retaliatory actions, state governments especially the Opposition-ruled states united in the time of crisis. Extending his full support on Wednesday, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin said, “Tamil Nadu stands with the Indian Army against terrorism. With our Army, for our nation. Tamil Nadu stands resolute,” he posted on X.

Leader of Opposition and AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami commended the Indian Armed Forces “for their precise execution of #OperationSindoor, targeting terror camps in Pakistan and PoK in response to the Pahalgam attack.” In a message on X, he said, “Under the vigilant leadership of Hon’ble Prime Minister Thiru. @narendramodi Avl, justice has been delivered. This decisive action underscores our nation’s unwavering commitment to eradicating terrorism and safeguarding our citizens.”

Backing the operation, Tamil film superstar Rajinikanth in his social media post said, “The fighter’s fight



begins...No stopping until the mission is accomplished!” He told the Prime Minister, “the entire NATION is with you.”

West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee said her government will cooperate completely with the central government. “I had discussions with the central government and with all the departments. Due to privacy, I will not disclose anything. At this moment of crisis, we should all be together. There should not be any differences as we all love our country. People should not spread unnecessary news to create panic,” added Mamata Banerjee.

Bihar CM Nitish Kumar heaped praise on PM Modi following Operation Sindoor, and said that all people had irrefutable faith in leadership of the PM and was also proud of him. RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav said India, Indians, and Indian armed forces have never tolerated terrorism and separatism in any form and would also never accept it.

Union Minister and LJP (RV) chief Chirag Paswan saluted the courage, valour, and sentiments of Indian armed forces.

–Inputs by N Chitra, Aritra Singha, Dheeraj Kumar

Panic buying in Amritsar

Uncertainty over the retaliation by Pakistan and fake advisories after India’s Op Sindoor, led to panic buying among the residents of border city of Amritsar on Wednesday.

A number of people could be seen visiting bazaars in the morning – after the news pertaining to the “Op Sindoor” spread with time – to stock grocery items and other utility items and queues of vehicles were seen at petrol stations in most parts of the city in the morning.

There were reports of panic buying of ration, eatables, medicines and fuels in several parts of the city, even as some of shopkeepers also claimed they were already out of stocks of several items by afternoon. The orders to shut schools in the border areas by the government also fuelled people’s fears, leading to panic buying. However, even as fake advisories in the regard were also seen on social platforms asking people to stock up on cash, fuel, medicines and emergency supplies, there was a let-up in panic buying.

–Rajesh Moudgil

CBI director Sood gets 1-yr extension

PTI
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Wednesday extended the tenure of CBI Director Praveen Sood by one year.

Sood took over as the CBI director on May 25, 2023 for a two-year term.

The decision to extend his tenure was taken in a meeting of the selection committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and comprising Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Monday, officials said.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), based on the recommendations of the selection committee, approved Sood's extension for a period of one year beyond May 24.

Sood is a 1986-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Karnataka cadre.

OPERATION SANKALP | Gunfight in forests of Chhattisgarh near Telangana after inputs about presence of senior cadres

22 Naxals killed in Bijapur

PTI
BIJAPUR

Twenty-two Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security forces on Wednesday in the forests of Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district bordering Telangana during Operation Sankalp, a massive counter-insurgency initiative, a senior police official said.

The gunfight broke out in the morning in the Karregutta hills forest along the interstate border, he said.

"So far, bodies of 22 Naxalites have been recovered and a search operation was underway in the area", he said, adding that the identity of the slain cadres was yet to be established. With the latest encounter, the toll of Naxalites gunned down under Operation Sankalp since April 21 has climbed to 26.

Operation Sankalp, one of



So far, bodies of 22 Naxalites have been recovered and a search op was underway, a senior police official said

the biggest counter-insurgency actions launched in the Bastar region, involves around 24,000 security personnel from different units including District Reserve Guard (DRG), Bastar Fighters, Special Task Force (STF), all units of state police, Central reserve Police Force (CRPF) and its elite unit CoBRA.

The operation was

each, were gunned down on the Karregutta hills, leading to the recovery of a huge cache of weapons, explosives, and other material.

On May 5, a woman Naxalite was killed in a gunfight with security forces in the area. The area surrounded by dense forests and lined by hills is believed to be the base of the Maoist battalion no. 1, the police official said.

"The inputs suggest several senior-level Maoist cadres have either been killed or seriously injured during this operation, but their colleagues managed to drag them inside the forest," he said.

The official said hundreds of Naxal hideouts and bunkers have been destroyed so far during the operation, and a huge cache of explosive material, detonators, medicines, and other items was seized.

launched based on inputs about the presence of senior cadres of battalion no. 1, the strongest military formation of Maoists, Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC) and Telangana state committee of Maoists.

On April 24, three Naxalite women, belonging to the PLGA battalion no.1 of Maoists carrying a reward of Rs 8 lakh

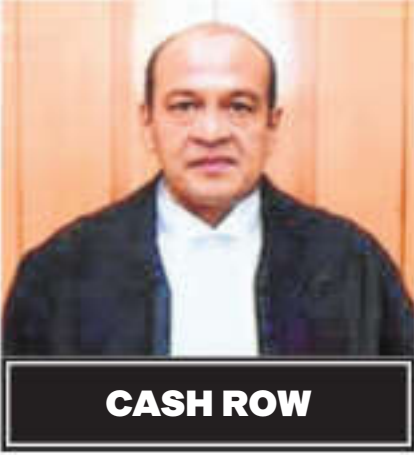
Panel confirms allegations against Justice Varma, CJI seeks his reply

PTI
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court-appointed panel has confirmed the cash discovery allegations against Allahabad High Court's Justice Yashwant Varma in its inquiry report, sources have said. Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna is also learnt to have nudged the judge to step down in view of the critical findings in the report.

The CJI has forwarded the panel's report to Justice Varma and sought his reply following the principle of natural justice, the sources said.

The report was submitted to the CJI by the three-member panel comprising Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Sheel Nagu, Himachal Pradesh High Court Chief Justice GS Sandhawalia and Justice Anu Sivaraman of the Karnataka



CASH ROW

High Court. It was finalised on May 3.

The panel analysed evidence and recorded the statements of over 50 people, including Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora and Delhi Fire Service chief who were among the first responders to the fire incident at Justice Varma's Lutyens Delhi residence at around 11.35 pm on March 14. He was Delhi High Court judge at the time.

Sources said the panel found clear evidence to confirm the allegations that a

huge stash of cash was found in the storeroom of Justice Varma's official residence at the time of fire incident. The allegation was repeatedly denied by the judge in his reply to the Delhi High Court chief justice.

The sources said CJI Khanna, who is set to superannuate on May 13, is likely to take the issue to its logical conclusion and has informally discussed the findings of the report with senior collegium members of the apex court.

The controversy was raised following a news report in the cash discovery row and led to several steps, including a preliminary inquiry by Delhi High Court Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya, judicial work being taken away from Justice Varma in the Delhi High Court, and later his transfer to the Allahabad High Court sans judicial work.

HC says unnatural sex with wife sans consent is offence

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

The Allahabad High Court recently ruled that non-consensual unnatural sexual intercourse by a man with his wife, even if she is above 18 years of age, is a punishable offence, according to Bar and Bench.

Justice Arun Kumar Singh Deshwal said that sex other than penile-vaginal intercourse is not a natural orientation of sex for the majority of women and the same cannot be done by the husband without the consent of the wife.

Hence, the judge held that even though the act may not fall under the definition rape

in Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the offence is punishable under Section 377, which criminalises unnatural sexual offences.

"Given the above analysis, it is clear that carnal sex, other than penile-vaginal intercourse is not a natural orientation of sex for the majority of women, therefore the same cannot be done by the husband, even with his wife without her consent. Therefore, this court holds that unnatural sexual intercourse by a man with his own wife without her consent, even if she is above 18 years, would be punishable u/s 377 IPC though that may not be rape as per Section 375 IPC," the single-judge stated.

Sambhal court notice to RaGa over remarks

PTI
SAMBHAL (UP)

A local court on Wednesday issued a notice and sought the response of leader of opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi over his alleged utterances on "fighting the Indian state itself".

Additional district judge (ADJ-II) Aarti Faujdar issued the notice on a complaint filed by Hindu Shakti Dal national president Simran Gupta.

On January 15, Gandhi alleged BJP and RSS had "captured every institution of country," and added, "We are now fighting the BJP, the RSS and the Indian state itself."

Modi: Indian astronauts' footprints will be on Moon 'Mars, Venus missions also on radar'

PTI
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday that India was marching ahead with renewed confidence in the field of space exploration and its astronauts' footprints will be on the Moon.

Mars and Venus were also on the the country's radar for exploration missions, he stressed in a pre-recorded message for the Global Space Exploration Conference (GLEX-2025) here.

Modi said for India, space was about exploration as well as empowerment, and listed out plans to set up the

Bharatiya Anatariksh Station by 2035 and land an Indian astronaut on the Moon by 2040.

"India's space journey is not about racing others. It is about reaching higher together. Together, we share a common goal to explore space for the good of humanity," he said in the video message that was recorded on Tuesday.

He said India has launched a satellite for the South Asian nations and the G20 satellite, announced during its presidency of the grouping, will be a gift to the Global South.

"Our first human space-flight mission, 'Gaganyaan', highlights our nation's rising aspirations," Modi said.

From front page

PAKISTAN PUNISHED

He said the Pahalgam attack was "driven by the objective of undermining normalcy returning to Kashmir" and "the family members were deliberately traumatised through the manner of killing, accompanied by the exhortation that they should take back the message."

He said following the identification of the attackers, "based on eyewitness accounts as well as other information available to law enforcement agencies", the intelligence developed an accurate picture of the planners and backers of this team. "The features of this attack also tie in with Pakistan's long-standing record of perpetrating cross-border attacks on India, which is well documented and beyond question."

The FS cautioned that "intelligence indicated that further attacks against India are impending" and therefore due to "compulsion, both to deter and prevent" India exercised its right to respond to deter such more cross-border terrorism.

Meanwhile, as India remained prepared to see if Pakistan would indulge in any escalation, Pakistani Defence Minister Khwaja Asif on Wednesday said, "If India stops attacking us, we will wrap up things." His remarks stood in sharp contrast to the bravado he displayed a day earlier when he had remarked, "If Pakistan is attacked then the world will remember our reaction, nobody will survive."

Trump hopes 'it ends...

Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has urged the National Security Advisors of both countries to keep lines of communication open and avoid escalation, his office said on Wednesday.

"Earlier this afternoon, @SecRubio spoke to the national security advisors from India and Pakistan. He urged both to keep lines of communication open and avoid escalation," the State Department said on a post X. Rubio also spoke with Pakistani National Security Advisor Asim Malik.

Rubio said he is monitoring the situation between India and Pakistan closely and hopes this "ends quickly".

"I am monitoring the situation between India and Pakistan closely. I echo @POTUS's comments earlier today that this hopefully ends quickly and will continue to engage both Indian and Pakistani leadership towards a peaceful resolution," Rubio said in a post on X.

China said it finds "India's military operation early this morning regrettable." "We are concerned about the ongoing situation," China's Foreign Ministry said. "China opposes all forms of terrorism," it said, adding that "We urge both sides to act in the larger interest of peace and stability, remain calm, exercise restraint and refrain from taking actions that may further complicate the situation," the statement said.

Asked about India's assertion that it targeted terror infrastructure in Pakistan and PoK, Lin said, "we also noted that both India and Pakistan have said that they don't hope to see escalation of

the situation".

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for "maximum military restraint" from India and Pakistan, saying the world cannot afford a military confrontation between the two countries.

"The Secretary-General is very concerned about the Indian military operations across the Line of Control and the international border. He calls for maximum military restraint from both countries. The world cannot afford a military confrontation between India and Pakistan," the secretary-general's spokesman, Stephane Dujarric, said.

Russia said, "We are deeply concerned about the intensifying military confrontation between India and Pakistan after the terrorist attack near the city of Pahalgam." Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova was quoted by TAS as saying, "We call on the parties involved to exercise restraint in order to prevent further deterioration of the situation in the region."

The United Arab Emirates, meanwhile, asked India and Pakistan "to exercise restraint, de-escalate tensions, and avoid further escalation that could threaten regional and international peace," according to a statement from UAE Deputy Prime Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Opposition unites...

We applaud their resolute resolve and courage."

He further wrote on "X" that, "Since the day of the Pahalgam terror attack, the Indian National Congress has categorically stood with the armed forces and the government to take any decisive action against cross border terror. National unity and solidarity is the need of the hour ... Our leaders have shown the path in past, and national interest is supreme for us."

Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav also chose brevity as he just wrote "Parakramo Vijayate" meaning 'valour triumphs' in his post on "X". This also happens to be the motto of the Kumaon Regiment of the Indian Army.

Trinamool Congress leader and West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee also wrote "Jai Hind! Jai India!" in her post.

Sajjad Gul, Lashkar...

He returned to the Valley, where he opened a diagnostic lab and provided logistical support to the terror group.

During his work as an overground worker (OGW) of the terror group, Gul was caught by the Special Cell of the Delhi police in 2002 from Nizamuddin Railway Station with 5 kilograms of RDX. It was revealed that he was conducting a recee and conspiring to conduct serial blasts in the national capital, for which he was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment on August 7, 2003.

He moved to Pakistan after his release from prison in 2017, where the ISI chose him to lead a proxy of the LeT - The Resistance Front (TRF) - in Kashmir in 2019 in the aftermath of Pulwama in February 2019.

His brother, an former doctor in Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital, Srinagar, was also a terrorist in the 1990s who had migrated to Saudi Arabia and later to Pakistan, where he is

now involved in terror funding with fugitives in Gulf countries.

Misri focus on TRF

Pakistan also has a well-deserved reputation as a haven for terrorists from around the world, with internationally proscribed terrorists enjoying impunity there. In addition, Pakistan has been known to wilfully mislead the world and international forums, such as the Financial Action Task Force, on this issue. The Sajid Mir case, in which this terrorist was declared dead and then, in response to international pressure, brought back to life, found alive and arrested, is the most glaring example.

According to the FBI website, Sajid Mir of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, carries a \$ 5 million reward on his head, and is wanted for his involvement in the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai which killed approximately 170 people, including six Americans. Mir was identified as the "chief planner of the attacks, directing preparations and reconnaissance, and was one of the Pakistan-based controllers during the attacks." He also conspired to attack a newspaper and its employees in Denmark between 2008 and 2009. Mir was indicted in the United States District Court, Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division, Chicago, Illinois, on April 21, 2011.Pakistan had claimed he was dead but later produced him alive and prosecuted him in order to get out of the FATF grey list.

PM chose codename

and strike targets, often autonomously or under human control, before being expended.

The coordinates for the attacks were provided by intelligence agencies, and the strikes were carried out entirely from Indian soil.

Wing Commander Vyomika Singh said that the locations were selected in such a manner as to ensure no damage to civilians and their infrastructure.

Col Sofiya Qureshi also presented the videos of destruction of terror camps, including from the Muridke and where David Headley and Ajmal Kasab, perpetrators of the 2008 Mumbai attacks, received training.

At 'Operation Sindoor' briefing in Delhi also Nari Shakti took centrestage.

Misri was flanked by Col Sofiya Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh, presenting a striking image of a combination of India's prowess in military and diplomacy.

After delivering the opening statement from the government, first in Hindi and then in English, Misri announced that the two officers would be briefing on the broader details of the operation.

Col Qureshi from the Army's Corps of Signals, and Wg Cdr Singh, a helicopter pilot, shared the names and details of the sites targeted in the early hours on Wednesday.

The army officer spoke in Hindi while the IAF helicopter pilot shared the details in English, complementing each other.

Wing Commander Singh said the strikes were taken through "precision capabilities". "Niche technology weapons with careful selec-

tion of warheads was ensured, so that there will be no collateral damage. The point of impact, in each of the target was a specific building or a group of buildings," the IAF officer said.

She said all targets were "neutralised with clinical efficiency", and the results "reiterate the professionalism" of the Indian armed forces, in the planning and execution of their operations, she added.

"India has demonstrated considerable restraint in its response. However, it must be said that the Indian armed forces are fully prepared to respond to Pakistani misadventures, if any that will escalate this situation. Jai Hind," the IAF officer said, as the briefing came to an end.

PM in business as...

property, was also discussed.

The PM had given full operational freedom to choose the mode, target and timing for their response to the Pahalgam attack.

The PM then conducted a meeting of the Cabinet in which decisions were taken on several non-strategic issues. He is learnt to have told the Cabinet that it was a "proud moment for everyone" and since "the entire nation was looking towards us". Modi also declared that "we are proud of our armed forces".

The Cabinet meeting, in a display of India's resolve to keep going with the development works in the face of any kind of adversity, took several decisions which had nothing to do with the strikes.

The Cabinet approved the National Scheme for Industrial Training Institute (ITI) Upgradation and the setting up of five National Centres of Excellence for Skilling as a centrally-sponsored scheme. It said an outlay of Rs 60,000 crore has been provided in Budget 2024-25 and Budget 2025-26 for the scheme.

The Cabinet also approved the expansion of academic and infrastructure capacity of five new Indian Institutes of Technology at Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh, Palakkad in Kerala, Bhilai at Chhattisgarh, Jammu and Dharwad in Karnataka. (IIT Bhilai), Jammu & Kashmir (IIT Jammu) and Karnataka (IIT Dharwad) at a total cost of Rs.11,828 crore over a period of four years from 2025-26 to 2028-29. It also approved creation of 130 faculty posts in these IITs and setting of five research parks therein.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs also took a decision on Cabinet Committee on approving grant of fresh coal linkages to Thermal Power Plants of central, state and Independent Power Producers (IPPs) under the revised SHAKTI Policy of 2017 which was drafted to change coal allocation from a nomination-based regime to a more transparent auction or tariff-based bidding process.

Incidentally, the way the Cabinet conducted itself without any signs of panic was also reflected in the Indian stock exchanges that remained resolute despite the conflict at the northern borders. Though the GIFT Nifty had indicated a tepid opening, both the NSE and BSE closed in the green, up nearly a tenth of a percentage point each. This contrasted with the situation in Pakistan where the Karachi Stock Exchange ended over 3 percent down.

Equality to guide payout for land acquisition: SC

PTI
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said the compensation for land acquisition cannot be assessed in a mechanical manner but must be guided by considerations of equality, equity and justice.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan said a fundamental principle in land acquisition jurisprudence was that lands with similar locational and developmental potential must be compensated equitably unless clear, objective distinctions justify otherwise.

The bench said it must caution against an "excessively positivist" approach in matters of land acquisition.

"It is well understood that the very exercise of assessing compensation is antithetical to rigid formalism. Compensation cannot be assessed in a mechanical or formulaic manner but must be guided by considerations of equality, equity, and justice," it said.

The apex court's verdict came on a batch of cross-appals filed by the Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation and several landowners challenging the quantum of compensation awarded by the Punjab and Haryana High Court for the land situated in Fazalwas and Kukrola villages in Gurugram district. The bench observed the acquisition proceedings commenced in April 2008 and the public purpose of the acquisition was to build Chaudhary Devi Lal Industrial Model Township. The determination of compensation for compulsory acquisitions under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, was fundamentally an exercise in equity, it added.

CM Stalin confident of retaining power in TN

PTI
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Wednesday expressed full confidence of winning the 2026 Assembly election and said the regime led by him in the state has enhanced the life standards of all the people.

Addressing an event held here to mark the completion of 4 years of the DMK regime, the chief minister said his government has created a scenario of no violence, including those based on caste or religion and also; there is no poverty or hunger deaths or inflation.

Stalin, President of the DMK, assumed office as chief minister on May 7, 2021.

Referring to a slew of welfare schemes one by one, Stalin said Tamil Nadu, with 9.69 per cent economic growth, ranked first in the country. "This is unprecedented economic growth."

State on high alert, joins ‘Operation Abhyaas’

Rescue teams deployed amid mock Mandovi bridge collapse

Civil defence drill conducted at Dabolim Airport, IOC depot

Mass casualty and transport disruption drill in Margao

THE GOAN | NETWORK

PANAJI
With Goa on high alert, air sirens were kept ready, selective areas witnessed power black-outs, rescue teams were deployed and a mock Mandovi bridge collapse scenario was enacted during a large-scale civil defence exercise ‘Operation Abhyaas’ on Tuesday.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has stated that Goa has been kept on high alert, being a coastal state. “Both districts have been kept on high alert. Goa is a coastal state... coast guard, police and others are also on alert,” he said while addressing a press conference after a cabinet meeting.

Both North and South Goa, designated as civil defence districts, took part in the nationwide civil defence preparedness drill held at 244 locations across the country. The exercise was held under the direction of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India, in the backdrop of the recent terror attacks in Pahalgam.

In North Goa, the drill was carried out at the Indian National Watersports Centre, Miramar; Panaji Ferry Wharf and M/s Goa Glass Fibre Ltd, Colvale. The Mandovi bridge collapse simulation at the Ferry Wharf tested the preparedness of key departments and agencies in search and rescue, evacuation, and mass casualty management. Civil Defence volunteers also actively took part in the exercise.

In South Goa, mock drills were carried out at various locations including Margao



Mock civil defence drills held at Panaji ferry wharf and at Donapaula.

railway station, IOCL terminal at Vasco, and Dabolim. The coordinated effort saw participation from hundreds of police personnel, firefighters, civil defence volunteers, home guards, officials from the district administration and various government departments.

The government stated that the objective was to test inter-agency coordination, public response, and emergency services in a simulated crisis. The exercise helped evaluate the readiness of line departments and ensured citizens

are sensitised to follow instructions during real emergencies.

CM Sawant had earlier appealed to the public to cooperate and participate in the drill by following alerts issued via radio and television.

“The primary objective of the exercise is to assess the preparedness, response capabilities, and inter-agency coordination during civil emergencies, particularly in scenarios involving evacuation, mass casualty management, firefighting, and search and rescue operations,” he said.

THE GOAN | NETWORK

VASCO
As part of a nationwide civil defence exercise, a mock drill was conducted in Mormugao Taluka on Wednesday to bolster emergency preparedness in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack and ongoing border tensions.

The exercise focused on testing air-raid warning systems, shelter readiness, and evacuation procedures.

Drills were held at Dabolim Airport and the IOC depot in Vasco. Air raid sirens were heard across Vasco and Dabolim at 4 pm, triggering simulations that included mock evacuations, search and rescue operations, and a planned blackout to test the city’s crisis response capabilities.

Civil defence volunteers, including NCC cadets, home guards, and students, actively participated in the drill.

At Dabolim Airport, a simulated fire evacuation from the administrative building was conducted, followed by the rescue of personnel from the premises. Speaking to reporters, Mormugao Deputy Collector Bhagwant Karmali said the exercise was part of Operation Abhyaas and aimed at evaluating the readiness of state authorities to handle emergency situations.

“The drill helps train volunteers in first aid, evacuation, and emergency protocols. With support from the police, CISF, fire services, and other stakeholders, we successfully executed the operation. A 15-minute blackout in the areas of Chicalim, Dabolim, and Sancoale followed the siren alert, allowing us to test the



Mock drill being conducted at the Administrative buliding in Dabolim Airport on Wednesday.

2 commercial flights cancelled

VASCO: Dabolim Airport Director George Varghese informed that two commercial flights had been cancelled at Dabolim airport on Wednesday.

“Flights to Chandigarh, Amritsar, and Hindon operate from Dabolim Airport, and two commercial flights have already been cancelled. We are monitoring the situation and are prepared for any developments,” Varghese said.

Noting that similar mock drills are conducted regularly at Dabolim airport, Varghese said: “We had a comparable exercise two weeks ago. Today’s mock drill focused on evacuation and rescue with the help of the state administration and CISF. Around 22 airports close to the nodal region have been closed down.”

efficiency of communication systems,” said Karmali.

A mock exercise simulating an air strike scenario was conducted at IOCL, Vasco. The exercise depicted significant damage and fire resulting from the simulated strike. Four seriously injured workers were shifted to Chicalim Sub-District Hospital (SDH), while 20 workers were successfully rescued.

A mock drill was conducted at Dabolim Airport to simulate an air strike scenario. In this exercise, 20 civilians, portrayed as trapped, were successfully rescued.

The operation was co-ordinated by Mormugao Deputy Collector Bhagwant Karmali. Assistance was provided by officials from various line departments and agencies.

THE GOAN | NETWORK

MARGAO

A simulated mass casualty and public transport disruption drill was conducted on Wednesday evening to test the civil defence preparedness as part of the nationwide exercise ‘Operation Abhyaas’.

Officials and personnel of various agencies participated in the mock drill as they tested the efficacy of handling casualties in times of emergencies.

Deputy Collector, Margao Ganesh Barve told the media that around 40 casualties were reported during the mock drill, out of which the two severely injured were shifted to the South Goa District Hospital, while those who sustained minor injuries were treated at the local centre.

He further said the fire personnel, along with the tenders, also participated in an exercise to put out the fire.

South Goa District Collectorate officials said the comprehensive multi-agency mock

exercise titled “Operation Abhyaas” has been conducted in the district in pursuance of the Civil Defence Act, 1968 and the Civil Defence Rules, 1968 and as part of the nationwide civil defence preparedness initiative under the directive of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Collector & District Magistrate, South Egna Cleetus oversaw the exercise, involving the coordinated participation of key response agencies and stakeholders, including the Goa Police, Fire & Emergency Services, Directorate of Health Services, Airport Authority of India, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., Konkan Railway Corporation, civil defence volunteers, home guards, District Disaster Management Authority (South Goa), and other supporting departments.

This simulation aims to strengthen district-level emergency readiness and inter-agency coordination during civil emergencies involving critical infrastructure.



The ‘Operation Abhyaas’ mock drill underway at the Margao railway station.

Govt rethinks amending Devasthan Act after tragic Shirgao stampede

PROPOSAL AIMS TO STANDARDISE CONDUCT OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVITIES

THE GOAN | NETWORK

PANAJI

Against the backdrop of Shirgao temple stampede, which claimed six lives and injured over 80 people, the Goa government is once again considering amendment to the Devasthan Regulation 1933, in the larger interest of citizens and ensuring any move does not hurt the religious sentiments and flare law and order situation.

The fact-finding committee, constituted by the State government to investigate the

CONTROL OF FESTIVITIES

The fact-finding committee is expected to recommend to the State government for an immediate need to amend the regulations to have a standard procedure for conduct of festivities and have a strict government control on conduct of the festivities, etc

stampede that took place during the Shree Devi Lairai Zatra at Shirgao, last weekend, has deliberated on the issue and is of considerable view that the Devasthan Regulations need to be amended to make State government as party to the functioning of the temple

committees.

Highly placed sources confirmed that the fact-finding committee is expected to recommend to the State government for an immediate need to amend the regulations to have a standard procedure for conduct of festivities and

have a strict government control on conduct of the festivities, etc. “The issue was discussed by the fact-finding committee in detail,” sources said.

Taking note of a series of instances of rising conflicts between Mazanias (Mahajans) and other community members or villagers over temple rights, resulting in disturbing peace and causing law and order situations, the Government in January, 2023, proposed before the Goa Legislative Assembly its plan to amend the regulations.

Zatra stampede: Fact-finding panel to submit report today

THE GOAN | NETWORK

PANAJI

The fact-finding committee, constituted to investigate the stampede during Shree Devi Lairai Zatra at Shirgao, will submit its report to the State government on Thursday, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said.

Addressing a press conference post cabinet meeting, Sawant said that the cabinet members observed a minute of silence for the Lairai Zatra stampede incident and held discussion on it. “The fact-finding committee will submit its report tomorrow (Thursday). We will brief public on the findings of the com-

mittee,” he said.

The committee is led by Commissioner-cum-Revenue Secretary IAS Sandeep Jacques, with Deputy Inspector General of Police Varsha Sharma, Transport Director Pravimal Abhishek (IAS) and Tikam Singh Verma as its members.

The committee is investigating the tragedy that claimed six lives and injured 80 others.

The committee has recorded the statements of Collector Sneha Gitte, Superintendent of Police Akshat Kaushal, Deputy Superintendent of Police Jivba Dalvi, Deputy Collector Bhimnath Khorjuvekar – who all are transferred from the jurisdiction following the

incident.

The committee also met the members of the temple committee, some Dhond and villagers.

As reported earlier, the Committee has noted that a similar incident on a minor scale was witnessed even last year; however, no injuries were reported. The incident, infact, took place at the same site, where it happened in the wee hours of Saturday.

The committee has also observed that despite the narrow road, temple committees allowed stalls on both the sides of the road and also ignored some of the precautionary measures recommended by the police.

Coastal body appoints NIO to conduct revised beach-carrying capacity study

PROCESS TO DETERMINE PERMISSIBLE NUMBER OF BEACH SHACKS

THE GOAN | NETWORK

PANAJI

After almost seven years, the Goa government has initiated a process to conduct a revised beach-carrying capacity study of the coastal belt.

The Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA) – the nodal agency for undertaking the exercise, has appointed National Institute of Oceanography for the detailed study, which is expected to be completed before the upcoming tourism season.

Sources confirmed that GCZMA has issued a work order to NIO for assessing the

REGULATE BEACH SHACKS

- Goa government initiates a revised beach-carrying capacity study after nearly seven years, aiming for completion before the next tourism season
- The study will assess the number of beach shacks that can be permitted, considering CRZ areas,

no-development zones, and ecologically sensitive regions

- The State government suggests allowing temporary structures in no-development zones (excluding eco-sensitive areas), based on CZMP 2011 and CRZ 2019 norms

beach carrying capacity of the coastal belt and to recommend the number of shacks that could be permitted based on the saturation and con-

sidering the no development zone cum CRZ areas, ecologically sensitive areas, etc.

It was in 2017, that the last beach-carrying capacity study

was undertaken through the Chennai-based National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM). The NCSCM had permitted 1,131 shacks for the entire coastal area; however, currently on an average 360 shacks are permitted on beaches.

NCSCM had recommended that only 33 per cent of the beach area can be made available for erection of shacks after deducting the ecologically sensitive areas, river mouth, creeks, fishing space and buffer area at entry points. The agency had advised the government to revise the carrying capacity study after five years.

THE GOAN | NETWORK

MAPUSA

A number of key reservoirs across the State have recorded a steady decline in water levels, largely attributed to the lack of adequate pre-monsoon showers.

According to data from the Water Resources Department (WRD), at least three major reservoirs have dipped below 30 per cent of their storage capacity, while only two dams – Chapoli and Gaunem – have reported levels above 50 per cent. The Anjunem dam, which supplies water to Sattari and parts of Bicholim, has seen its water level decline to just 27 per cent.

Similarly, the Tillari dam, a

DIP IN WATER LEVELS: A CONCERN?

- Several key reservoirs in Goa have seen a steady decline in water levels due to insufficient pre-monsoon showers
- At least three major reservoirs are now below 30% of their storage capacity, including Anjunem (27%), Tillari (29%), and Panchwadi (30%)

critical source of raw water for both drinking and irrigation across Goa, currently stands at 29 per cent.

The minor Panchwadi

- The Selaulim reservoir in South Goa stands at 43%, while Amthane remains at 45%, though both are considered relatively stable
- Smaller dams like Chapoli and Gaunem have maintained higher water levels at 51% and 60%, respectively

reservoir, catering to Shiroda and Panchwadi regions, has dropped to 30 per cent of its total capacity.

South Goa’s Selaulim res-

ervoir, considered the primary lifeline for drinking water in the region, is at 43 per cent capacity, while the Amthane reservoir – serving Bardez and parts of Bicholim – is relatively stable at 45 per cent.

In contrast, the smaller but vital Chapoli and Gaunem dams in Canacona have maintained relatively higher water levels, at 51 and 60 per cent, respectively. Despite the concerning trends, officials from the WRD have assured that the State is not facing an immediate water crisis.

“The current storage levels are sufficient to meet the State’s drinking water needs for at least the next two months,” a senior WRD official told The Goan.

Briefs

AHMEDABAD
Vande Bharat to have more AC chair car coaches

Western Railway is set to add four additional AC Chair Car coaches to the 20901/02 Mumbai Central–Gandhinagar Capital Vande Bharat Express. Until now, the train had 16 coaches, including 2 Executive Chair Cars and 14 AC Chair Cars. With the addition, the total number of coaches will increase to 20. This will raise the seating capacity from 1,128 to 1,440, allowing more passengers to enjoy a comfortable journey. According to railway officials, the decision was taken after observing consistently high occupancy rates and anticipating future travel demand on this popular route. No official date has been announced for the addition of the coaches, but the semi-high-speed train is expected to operate with 20 coaches by next week. Currently, the 16-coach Vande Bharat Express comprises two Executive Chair Cars (EC) with a total of 104 seats and 14 AC Chair Cars (CC) with 1,024 seats, totaling 1,128 seats. With the addition of four AC Chair Cars, the total seating capacity will increase to 1,440.

SURAT
Fire at Surat Mission Hospital

A major fire broke out at the Seventh Day Adventist Mission Hospital in the Athwa Lines area of Surat, causing panic among patients and hospital staff. Thick black smoke was seen billowing from the ground floor, prompting an urgent response from the fire brigade and local volunteers. No casualties were reported. Upon receiving the distress call, multiple fire engines rushed to the spot and immediately began firefighting operations. Firefighters worked swiftly to control the flames and evacuate those inside the building. The exact cause of the fire is still under investigation, and officials have yet to confirm how many people may have been trapped when the blaze erupted.

RTE: Notice for collecting money

Ahmedabad: Recently, the first round of admissions under the Right to Education (RTE) Act was conducted, and during this process, Anand Niketan School in Maninagar allegedly charged parents ₹69,000 for mandatory food and transportation services for newly admitted students. In response, parents filed a complaint, prompting the District Education Officer (DEO) to issue a notice to the school, demanding an explanation within 24 hours. At Anand Niketan School in Maninagar, new students from economically weaker backgrounds were granted admission to Class 1 under the RTE Act. Following the admission, the school requested parents to pay ₹69,000 for food and transportation services.

WHO IS SHE? | She was commissioned as a Lieutenant in 1999, has received commendations for her service in Op Parakram

Meet Col Sophia Qureshi, face of India’s military excellence

FPJ News Service
VADODARA

In the early hours of Wednesday, the Indian Air Force executed air strikes on nine terrorist hideouts in Pakistan under Operation Sindoor, eliminating several terrorists. The Indian Army disclosed details of this strategic strike during a press conference, with two distinguished female military officers, including Colonel Sophia Qureshi from Vadodara, Gujarat. Colonel Sophia Qureshi currently serves as a prominent officer in the Indian Army’s Corps of Signals. Renowned for her exemplary service, she commanded India’s team in the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission and played a pivotal role as a key trainer. Her involvement in Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) spans over six years, beginning with her deployment in the United Nations Congo Peacekeeping Mission in 2006. Hailing from Vadodara, Gujarat, Colonel Sophia Qureshi pursued her education in biochemistry at MS



University. Her family has a rich military background; her grandfather and father both served in the army. Colonel Sophia Qureshi is married to Major Tajuddin Qureshi, an Army officer in the Mechanized Infantry, and they have a son named Sameer Qureshi. Colonel Sophia Qureshi completed her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in Biochemistry from MS

University before joining the Indian Army through a Short Service Commission in 1999 at the age of 17. She underwent rigorous training at the Officers’ Training Academy in Chennai and was commissioned as a Lieutenant. Throughout her career, she has earned commendations for her exceptional contributions during various operations, including Operation Parakram and flood relief

efforts in North-East India. Colonel Sophia Qureshi led a 40-member contingent of the Indian Army in ‘Force 18,’ a multinational military exercise held in Pune, where she represented India as the sole woman army officer. Her leadership skills and dedication were highlighted by former Chief of Defence Staff, the late Bipin Rawat, who emphasized the Indian Army’s commitment to equal opportunities and responsibilities irrespective of gender. In a statement regarding Colonel Sophia Qureshi’s participation in ASEAN summits, General Bipin Rawat said, “In the Army, we believe in equal opportunities and equal responsibilities. Sophia Qureshi embodies leadership qualities that transcend gender barriers, earning her role not through tokenism but through merit.” Colonel Sophia Qureshi continues to inspire as a symbol of courage, leadership, and dedication within the Indian Army. Her journey from Vadodara to the global stage of military diplomacy highlighting Gujarat’s pride in her achievements and contributions to national security.

Gujarat rains: 21 dead, red alert in 23 districts

FPJ News Service
AHMEDABAD

Gujarat has been reeling under intense rainfall and thunderstorms for the last 48 hours, triggered by three upper air cyclonic circulations and a trough line, affecting 103 talukas and resulting in 21 deaths across the state. Central and East Gujarat have witnessed the highest casualties, accounting for 17 deaths and over 20 injuries, while 3 people and 45 animals died in North Gujarat due to rain-related incidents. Torrential downpour has battered multiple regions, with Mahuva in Bhavnagar recording 7.5 inches of rainfall within just six hours. Other severely affected areas include Lathi in Amreli (2.5 inches), Savarkundla (2.5 inches),



Liliya (2 inches) and Amreli town (2 inches). The unrelenting rain has led to widespread damage to infrastructure, electricity lines, and roadways. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a red alert in 23 districts and two Union Territories, warning of continued heavy to very heavy rainfall and thunder-

storms in areas such as Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Bhavnagar, Amreli, Vadodara, Surat, Valsad, Daman, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli. Moderate rainfall accompanied by winds reaching speeds of 41 to 61 kmph has been forecasted for the next three hours. An orange alert is active in Mehsana, Patan, Rajkot, Surendranagar,

Porbandar, and Junagadh, while a yellow alert covers Banaskantha, Morbi, Jamnagar, Devbhoomi Dwarka, and Kutch, which are also vulnerable due to the cyclonic conditions. In Ahmedabad, the situation has worsened with the opening of Vasna Barrage gates, prompting an alert for Dholka and low-lying areas. The fire department responded to over 20 tree fall incidents, while a transformer caught fire, disrupting electricity in parts of the city. Fire incidents were also reported in two AC units at an ATM on Waghodia Road. At noon on Tuesday, the city was engulfed in darkness as thick black clouds loomed. Light rain continued in areas like Naranpura, Vadaj, Memnagar, Akhbarnagar, and

Shastri Bridge, causing major traffic congestion near Thaltej and Palladium Mall due to waterlogging. Interestingly, the rainy weather sparked a long queue outside the famous Anand Dalvada shop in Naranpura, where people stood in lines for hot snacks and kheer for 15–20 minutes despite the downpour. In Smart City Vadodara, the ongoing 100-day mission to clean and widen the Vishwamitri River and drainage systems failed to prevent flooding in slum and low-lying areas. Water entered homes and shops in areas like Hathikhana and Tulsiwadi, while parked vehicles were submerged. Angry residents have raised questions about the efficacy of the municipal administration.

Air India Express leaves behind 25 passengers

FPJ News Service
SURAT

“This is utter negligence—we were left behind like baggage,” shouted a stranded passenger in a now-viral video capturing the frustration and chaos at Delhi Airport on Monday night, after Air India Express left behind 25 Surat-bound passengers. The passengers were en route from Guwahati to Surat via Delhi on the Guwahati-Delhi-Surat connecting flight, operated by Air India Express. But due to what passengers described as a “complete failure of coordination and basic customer service,”

The video shows passengers arguing with Delhi airport staff, pleading for answers and accountability. The Air India Express manager in Surat was reportedly unresponsive, further fueling the anger. The incident reflects poorly on Air India Express, a subsidiary of the Tata Group, especially at a time when the airline is under scrutiny for frequent operational lapses. Passengers also expressed dismay at the flight’s consistent unreliability, with many calling it “regularly irregular.” “All it needed was a 30-minute delay in departure, and none of this would have



SGCCI pushes for 24x7 int’l airport

Melvyn Thomas
SURAT

In a decisive move to boost Surat’s global connectivity, the Southern Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SGCCI) held an impactful meeting with Surat Airport Director Anand Sharma on Tuesday, urging the immediate commencement of international air-cargo operations and 24x7 airport access. The meeting, held at 4:00 PM at the Surat International Airport premises, was attended by key stakeholders from the Chamber and Airport Authority of India. SGCCI President Vijay Mewawala set the tone for the session, highlighting the urgency of equipping Surat with robust international air

logistics infrastructure. “Surat contributes significantly to Gujarat’s economy through diamonds, textiles, and agri-exports. Our entrepreneurs are ready. All we need now is an airport that works round the clock with international cargo access,” Mewawala asserted in his welcome speech. He pointed out that despite Surat’s global trade links, the lack of international cargo flights and limited airport operational hours have kept the region from realizing its full potential. In response, Airport Director Anand Sharma reassured the Chamber that development plans are underway. “We are working towards enhancing passenger convenience and airport utility,” he said.

Rs12.5cr worth of hydroponic ganja seized at A’bad airport

FPJ News Service
AHMEDABAD

In a shocking escalation of drug trafficking incidents, hydroponic marijuana worth ₹12.5 crore was seized from three Indian tourists arriving from Bangkok at Ahmedabad’s Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport on Tuesday. This marks the second consecutive day such a seizure has been made and the third major bust within a week, indicating a disturbing trend in international drug smuggling via Thailand. The Air Intelligence Unit (AIU), acting on a tip-off and suspicious baggage scanning results, intercepted the three passengers and found 12,557

kilograms of hydroponic ganja packed in 24 airtight packets. Officials revealed that the contraband was hidden in such a way that it could evade casual inspection, but scanning revealed anomalies in



the luggage contents. “This is not a coincidence; it points to an organised drug syndicate using Indian tourists as carriers,” said a senior customs official involved in the operation. “All three passengers have been arrested under the Narcotic Drugs and

Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985, and further investigation is underway.” Just a day earlier, an Indian woman flying in from Bangkok via Vietnam was caught with 19,728 kilograms of hydroponic ganja hidden in her trolley bag. The ganja, packed in 18 vacuum-sealed packets, was confirmed by lab testing and valued at ₹19.72 crore. She, too, was arrested under the NDPS Act. These two back-to-back seizures come on the heels of another massive bust a week ago, where four tourists from Bangkok were caught with 37 kilograms of hydroponic ganja cleverly disguised among snack packets. The total value of that seizure was estimated at ₹37 crore.

Bhavika wins Miss India Millennium Universe



FPJ News Service
SURAT

In a proud moment for Surat and the BrahmKshatriya community of Rajasthan, 25-year-old Bhavika Khatri has won the prestigious title of Miss India Millennium Universe 2024. The national-level beauty pageant was held in Udaipur, Rajasthan, on April 30, with over 50 participants from across India. Bhavika emerged as the winner after advancing through the final round of 12 finalists. Originally from Rajasthan and now residing in Surat, Bhavika will represent India at the international stage in Paris

this September, bringing immense pride to her roots and her city. A former medical student, Bhavika made a bold shift to the film industry at the age of 21. In just four years, she has starred in 12 Gujarati films and won over 70 awards in both education and acting. Recently seen in a Gujarati film, Bhavika is now stepping into Hindi television and web series as well. Her upcoming projects include a significant role in Ramayana, set to air on DD National, as well as performances in Kamadhenu on Star Plus and over 40 album songs. Her film Prem nu Dhaating,

produced by Jignesh Khatri, and DOWRY, directed by Suresh Joshi, are set for release soon. She will also appear in Tu Duniya Che Mari alongside popular actor Vikram Thakor, which is expected to hit theatres next month. Bhavika expressed her gratitude, saying, “When I was studying medicine, people recognized me as an influencer. I faced many challenges being the only daughter in my family, but with constant support from my father, mother, and brother, I’ve come this far. I now aim to be an inspiration and a proud representative of my society.”

Surat to host night cyclothon for healthy, obesity-free state

FPJ News Service
SURAT

Gujarat has declared the year 2025 as Urban Development Year, under which a series of city-centric events are being organized across the state. As part of this initiative, a special campaign titled “Healthy Gujarat, Obesity-Free Gujarat” will be held across all 17 municipal corporations and 36 municipalities on Sunday, May 11, 2025. The Surat Municipal Corporation will organize a 10-kilometre Night Cyclothon-



25 on May 11, starting at 6:30 PM from the Police Parade Ground, passing through Rahul Raj Mall, and returning to the starting point. Around 7,000 participants are expected to take part in the event.

Municipal Commissioner Shalini Agarwal chaired meetings with the cycling association, educational and voluntary institutions, sports authority of Gujarat, and the state yoga board to ensure broad community participation.

GEARING UP FOR EMERGENCY | Police, SDRF and fire teams conduct search and rescue operations to enhance coordination

CITIES TEST war readiness

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

In a massive state-wide civil defence simulation, mock drills were conducted on Wednesday across five major districts of Madhya Pradesh — Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur, Gwalior and Katni. The coordinated exercise, held as per directives of the Ministry of Home Affairs, aimed at preparing forces and civilians alike for war-like emergency scenarios. The drills kicked off around 4 PM and continued into the evening with a city-wide blackout, plunging urban areas into total darkness for several minutes. This was followed by emergency response rehearsals, where police and civil defence units simulated fire control, rescue of injured civilians and emergency evacuations.

At Raja Bhoj Airport, authorities enacted a special war-time fire incident drill to test firefighting and passenger safety protocols. Local residents, though witnessing such an event for the first time, cooperated fully with the administration, following directions and observing safety procedures.

Authorities recorded blackout sequences and teams practised moving

casualties to nearby hospitals amid simulated chaos—demonstrating high alertness and rapid response.



A cop during mock drill at New Market in Bhopal on Wednesday

SIRENS WAIL, LIGHTS OFF DURING MOCK DRILL

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

At 7:30 PM on Wednesday, Bhopal came to a standstill as pitch darkness engulfed the city during a 12-minute blackout drill simulating wartime conditions. Sirens wailed across neighbourhoods, reminiscent of the 1971 India-Pakistan war, especially for elderly citizens who lived through that era.

The blackout was part of a state-wide civil defence exercise to prepare citizens and authorities for emergency situations, amid rising geopolitical tension. The drill, intensified by overcast skies, created a realistic war-like atmosphere.

Lights were voluntarily switched off in homes, shops, hospitals, malls, hotels and even vehicles. Major intersections like Board Office, Roshanpura, Raja Bhoj Bridge, Kolar Road and MP Nagar saw traffic halt as police instructed commuters to turn off headlights. VIP



A view of Bhopal during black out on Wednesday evening

CM MONITORS DRILL, URGES AWARENESS

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav reviewed the drill operations across all five cities and held discussions with district collectors. He said that every district must remain alert and complete all necessary civil defence preparations. He also directed that civilians be educated about emergency protocols to protect themselves in crises. "Public participation and awareness are key to a safe and effective response," CM said, calling on officials to intensify civil defence outreach efforts.

Road, too, plunged into complete darkness, with long queues of stationary vehicles lining the street.

In the Old City, areas like Jehangirabad, Shahjahanabad, Aishbagh, and Chowk followed suit. Even the Taj-ul-Masajid's minaret lights were switched off, adding to the chilling realism of the scene. Police made announcements across the city urging people to cooperate

and follow protocol.

Despite the eerie quiet, the scene wasn't without its modern twist—many residents stepped out to record videos of the blackout on their mobile phones, turning the event into a surreal blend of past memories and present-day digital curiosity.

The drill was a part of a broader effort to assess readiness and public awareness in times of crisis.

19 DSPs now part of state police



1st batch of DSPs trained under new criminal law

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

The parade of probationary Deputy Superintends of Police (DSPs) of 43rd batch was held on Madhya Pradesh Police Academy parade ground on Wednesday. In all, 19 probationers took part in the parade. Now, they have be-

come part of Madhya Pradesh Police.

State DGP Kailash Makwana who was the chief guest said the newly inducted DSPs were placed on the job across state where senior officials informed them about their work. According to Makwana, they are the first batch of DSPs who have been trained under new criminal law. Out of 19 DSPs, seven are women.

The DGP felicitated new DSPs Anand Rai and Sujeet Kumar Kadve for obtaining first and second position in outdoor training.

184 mule bank accounts identified, owners get notice

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

Although the cyber connen are operating from far off areas and overseas, they are using local bank accounts for transferring the cash duped from people through digital arrests and other pretexts. Cyber crime branch police have identified 184 suspected mule bank accounts in Bhopal through joint cyber crime co-ordination team (JCCT) portal or Samanvay portal. Notices are now being issued to owner of these suspected mule bank accounts.

Cyber crime branch officials said cyber police of other states sealed the suspected mule bank accounts and shared their information and details of their owners on JCCT portal as these bank accounts were found to be used by the cyber connen for com-



Till now, notices have been issued to owners of 70 such bank a/cs in the city

Bank accounts used for transferring cash duped through digital arrest, other pretexts

mitting frauds.

Bhopal cyber crime branch identified the mule bank accounts that were opened in different banks in Bhopal and prepared a list of their

owners with their address and other details.

ACP (cyber crime) Sujeet Tiwari said a team had been formed for issuing notice to owners of these bank accounts while informing them to approach the cyber cops of the concerned cities for giving clarification. Till now, notices have been issued to owners of 70 such bank accounts in the city, he added.

Earlier, the cyber crime branch had issued notices to banks to take action against suspected mule bank accounts and help cops in their identification. Moreover, bank officials were asked to strengthen the verification process for opening new bank accounts after it came to fore that people from outside the city and states opened bank accounts on forged documents and fake rent agreements.

Congress district heads to be appointed in two weeks

State in-charge held meetings of several committees

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

Congress's state in-charge, Harish Choudhary, and MPCC president Jitu Patwari held a meeting with the members of various committees of the party on Wednesday.

At the election management committee meeting, the party decided to complete the formalities for appointments soon. The posts of district unit presidents should be filled within two weeks, Choudhary said.

He said block presidents should also be appointed and pending issues settled.

All partymen should swing into election management after the appointments, he



said. Choudhary had to hold a meeting with the media cell, too. But all spokespersons were not informed about the meeting.

Most of the spokespersons were absent from the meeting because of certain confusion.

Choudhary, however, held a meeting with the media and social media in-charges.

He told all the in-charges to get ready for the election.

The party has to be ready at the grassroots and look more aggressive.

Chintan meeting can be held in Pachmarhi

The Congress may organise a Chintan meeting in Pachmarhi in the coming days, keeping in mind the assembly election of 2028.

It figured in several meetings between the party in charge and the leaders that the Congress holds a state conference.

Every leader of the party should participate in it.

Save Constitution drive put off

The Congress has put off its save constitution (Samvidhan Bachao) campaign, keeping in mind the situation arising out of Operation Sindoor by the Indian Army.

CM: Working women hostels in all cities

Milk for anganwadi children soon

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

Chief minister Mohan Yadav said hostels for working women would be set up in all cities of the state. Besides, women and child development department and Ayush department will prepare an action plan for the health of women and children, their physical growth and availability of nutrition.

The chief minister was reviewing activities of women and child development department at Mantralaya on Wednesday. He directed officials to present an action plan within a month over how to improve the supplementary

food offered at anganwadis.

To provide protein rich food, gram and other nutrition sources will be given. Milk procured from milk unions will be provided to anganwadi children. Nutritious food will be provided to pregnant women.

He added that resources of social institutes, industrial units and temples would be used for betterment of anganwadis.

For safe child birth, adequate facilities will be provided to pregnant women who reach hospitals from remote areas before their delivery date.

All the anganwadis will be run in government buildings in all districts of the state. At the meeting, it was informed that through 57 one stop centres, help to women in distress will be provided.

'Arrangement temporary'

Dr.D.P. Singh, in-charge of all ABC centres under BMC, has refuted these allegations. Speaking to Free Press, he said that the arrangement is temporary, intended to sustain sterilisation work and control costs until new systems are in place.

Police, administration on alert mode after Operation Sindoor

CM and Congress leaders congratulate Indian Army

OUR STAFF REPORTER

BHOPAL

The government has asked the police and administration to remain on alert after Operation Sindoor.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) destroyed many terrorists' hideouts in POK to avenge the killings of tourists in Pahalgam in the early hours of Wednesday.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav told Director General of Police Kailash Makwana and ADG (Intelligence) Sai Manohar to keep the police on alert mode.

He held the talks with Makwana and Manohar after the Operation Sindoor.

Makwana also discussed law and order with the police officers across the state. He also said to the administration to remain alert.

Makwana told the officials to keep an eye on the suspicious people.

Operation Sindoor has delighted everyone. The officials have been told to monitor the suspicious people.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav expressed happiness about the air attack on the terrorists' hideouts in POK.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi always translates his words into deeds, Yadav said.

The destruction of nine hideouts of Pakistani terrorists



BJP MLA Bhagwandas Sabnani and BJP workers celebrate Operation Sindoor success



All India Muslim Tyohar committee members burn flag of Pakistan

delighted every citizen of the country, he said.

The Indian Army has taught a lesson to the enemy, Yadav said.

He said all Indians were united against the massacre of 26 tourists in Pahalgam.

The Congress also ex-

pressed joy at the IAF action.

Leader of the Opposition Umang Singhar congratulated the IAF. BJP's state unit president VD Sharma and MPCC president Jitu Patwari also congratulated the Indian Army for destroying terrorists' camps in Pakistan.

People watch Indian Army's heroic deeds throughout night

CM congratulates the army at 2.16 am on social media

Bhopal: The people across the state woke up in the early hours of Wednesday to watch the heroic acts of the Indian Army inside the Pakistani territory.

Each resident kept himself posted about each moment of

the attack. The Indian Army informed the people about the action at 1:51am, writing Operation Sindoor.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav congratulated the Indian Army on social media at 2:16am. BJP's state unit president VD Sharma, organisational general secretary Hitanand Sharma and state media in-charge Ashish Agar-

wal remained active on social media throughout the night.

Whosoever came to know about the army's action informed their acquaintances about it. Everyone was enthusiastic about the action. Every citizen of India wanted a strong action against Pakistan after the Pahalgam massacre.

The action of the Indian Army delighted every citizen.

Coaching centre owner held in Love Jihad case

24 obscene videos found

FP News Service

MORENA

In a shocking revelation, police nabbed Aslam Khan alias Abhi, owner of a computer coaching centre named Abhi Insaniyat in Jiawajiganj, on charges of blackmail, sexual exploitation, and Love Jihad. The arrest followed complaints from a victim's family and members of the Hindu Jagran Manch.

Khan allegedly posed as a Hindu named 'Abhi' and lured female students into his institute by showcasing his supposed devotion to Lord Shiva. Daily writings of Shiv Mahima on the classroom blackboard and multiple photos of Lord Shiva on the

premises were used as a cover to mislead students and parents. Police recovered 24 objectionable videos recorded through hidden cameras installed in the institute's library. The videos allegedly show Khan engaging in obscene acts with female students, whom he later blackmailed by threatening to leak the footage.

He reportedly coerced some into physical relationships and attempted to force religious conversion.

One brave victim broke the silence and informed her parents, who then contacted Devendra Mudgal of Hindu Jagran Manch. The group caught Khan red-handed and handed him over to the Kotwali police. Investigations revealed Khan is a native of Gormi, Bhind, and is linked to the Insaniyat Foundation, a



Aslam Khan alias Abhi

group whose members avoid surnames to mask identities. His institute had a partner named Pradeep Sharma, who is also under scrutiny.

Authorities suspect Khan is part of a wider racket spanning multiple districts and possibly international links. CSP Deepali Chandoria confirmed the ongoing investigation and stated that while Hindu imagery filled the coaching centre, the accused's official records list him as Aslam Khan. The case has sparked outrage, with Hindu groups demanding a deeper probe into coaching centres being used for exploitation under the guise of education.

Youth ends life over digital arrest threat

Cyber fraudster threatened to implicate him falsely in Pahalgam terror case

Our Staff Reporter

INDORE

A 27-year-old youth committed suicide in Hira Nagar police station area on Tuesday after allegedly being mentally tortured by a cyber fraudster who threatened to implicate him falsely in the Pahalgam terrorist attack. The fraudster reportedly digitally arrested him and demanded money, claiming that if the payment wasn't made, he would be falsely linked to a terror mission.

The deceased was identified as Anurag Gajbhiye, a resident of Veena Nagar. According to the family members, he had been ac-

tively searching for jobs online and spent most of his time browsing the internet for employment opportunities.

They said he began behaving unusually and often spoke about being offered a secret agent job by the Indian government, where he was allegedly instructed to conceal his identity.

Anurag had reportedly told relatives that someone online had tricked him and taken his account details and digital signatures. When Anurag couldn't pay the money demanded, the fraudster threatened to falsely frame him in the Pahalgam terror incident.

Under extreme psychological pressure, Anurag began fearing for his life, even expressing paranoia that passing cars outside his house could be surveillance vehicles and someone could kill him. The constant fear and manipulation led him to take the extreme step.

Vet shortage hits ABC centres amid NGO exit, funds delay

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

A dispute between Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) and an NGO has triggered an acute shortage of veterinary doctors at Animal Birth Control (ABC) centres in the city. The issue stems from the

abrupt withdrawal of services by the NGO managing the Kajlikheda ABC centre in February, leaving BMC scrambling to manage operations.

Currently, Bhopal has three ABC centres—Karariya, Adampur and Kajlikheda—which collectively sterilise nearly 20,000 stray dogs every

year. These centres function with NGO partnerships, but the Kajlikheda fallout has forced the BMC to divert limited manpower. As a temporary solution, Dr. Saurabh, who was already heading the Karariya centre, has been given additional charge of the Kajlikheda unit.

The move has drawn sharp criticism from animal welfare activists and pet lovers, who question the feasibility of one vet managing two high-demand centres. Concerns over post-operative care, rising dog fatalities, and overall mismanagement are being raised loudly.

Briefs

AGRA Police personnel suspended

Four police personnel in Muzaffarnagar were suspended for allegedly coercing a temple Mahant to give large sums of money. The Mahant had filed a complaint with SSP Abhishek Singh, providing call recordings as evidence. A preliminary inquiry was ordered, and further action will be taken against guilty officers. Mahant Sukhram of the Nath sect's Shiva temple in Harsauli filed a complaint on Sunday with SSP Abhishek Singh, prompting an investigation.

PRAYGRAJ UP board penalize absent teachers

The Uttar Pradesh Secondary Education Board is investigating around 30,000-35,000 teachers who skipped evaluation duties despite serving as room invigilators during exams. The board will take strict action against those found guilty, including possible registration of criminal cases. Approximately 1,48,667 teachers were appointed as evaluators for the evaluation of about 2.84 crore answer sheets across 261 centres.

AGRA DRDO develops parachutes

The Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment (ADRDE) in Agra has developed a parachute system for the Gaganyaan programme's uncrewed mission. The system comprises 10 parachutes designed for sequential deployment to ensure the safe return of the astronaut-carrying capsule. The parachutes have cleared sub-level testing and will be used for the mission.

KAUSHAMBI Jail sets up open-air gym

Kaushambi district jail has launched an open-air gym to promote physical health and well-being among its over 800 inmates and jail staff. The initiative is part of a state government project to set up open gyms in all 75 jails across Uttar Pradesh. Over 800 inmates lodged at the Kaushambi district jail will benefit from yoga, physical training, skill development, literacy, and other activities.

PILIBHIT Man kills injured leopardess

Wildlife activists have raised concerns over the delay in action against a man who allegedly assaulted an injured leopardess with an axe in Pilibhit. Despite video evidence, activists accuse the forest department of inaction and allege the accused is being protected. They accused the Pilibhit forest division of inaction and wrote to UP's principal chief conservator of forest (Wildlife), Anuradha Vemuri, while also filing complaints via the CM's grievance portal.

SHAHJAHANPUR 6-year-old raped at wedding

A six-year-old girl was allegedly raped by an unidentified person during a wedding ceremony in Shahjahanpur district. The girl was found covered in blood after going missing during the event. Police have registered a case and formed teams to identify and arrest the accused.

STF RETALIATION | City witnesses patriotic fervour following India's POK airstrike Operation sindoor: “Ye Hai Naya Bharat, Ghar Mein Ghuske Marega”

Hasan Zaidi LUCKNOW

Following the Indian Air Force's targeted airstrike in Pakistan occupied Kashmir under Operation Sindoor, Lucknow erupted in spontaneous celebrations, alongside state organized emergency preparedness drills. The airstrike, seen as a response to the Pahalgam terror attack, triggered widespread patriotic displays and mock readiness exercises across the city.

Residents took to the streets waving the tricolour, chanting slogans such as “Indian Army Zindabad.” At prominent spots like Aminabad, Chowk, and the 1090 crossing, traders and citizens distributed sweets and raised slogans in support of the armed forces. Organizations such as the Adarsh Vyapar Mandal and Hindu outfits led solidarity marches, displaying banners like “Ye Naya Bharat Hai Ghar Mein Ghuske Marega.”

Amid celebrations, civil defence teams conducted coordinated mock drills to simulate



air raid scenarios. Sirens sounded throughout the police line precincts, initiating black-out rehearsals. Civilians, including schoolchildren, were instructed to lie on the ground and cover their ears in

response to simulated bombings. Emergency protocols included firefighting demos and triage for mock casualties, with ambulance evacuations enacted in real-time. Muslim religious leaders welcomed the

strike. Maulana Khalid Rasheed Firangi Mahali and Maulana Yasooob Abbas praised the operation, calling it a fitting response to terrorism. “The whole world was watching; India responded decisively,”

said Abbas. Mock drills were also held at Darul Uloom Firangi and Lucknow University, where NCC cadets and students learned wartime safety procedures. At the Charbagh railway station, high

Red alert in UP after operation sindoor

A red alert has been declared across Uttar Pradesh following Operation Sindoor, in which Indian forces struck terror camps in Pakistan and PoK. In view of potential retaliatory threats, all UP Police field units have been ordered to intensify surveillance and coordinate with defence forces. Security has been tightened around key infrastructure, religious sites, and public gatherings as precautionary measures. Authorities remain on high alert to prevent any untoward incident.



DGP Prashant Kumar

My entire family had full faith our forces

“I want to thank Prime Minister Modi, the ministers, and the heads of the armed forces including the Air Force and the Army Chief for avenging my husband's death in the Pahalgam terror attack.” “I and my entire family had full faith in Prime Minister Modi and our armed forces, and the way they attacked the terrorist structures in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) has reinforced our faith.”



Ashanya wife of martyr Shubham Dwivedi

alert was declared, with DRM-level inspections carried out on ticket counters and platforms.

Minister Kapil Dev Aggarwal echoed public sentiment, stating, “We don't provoke, but we won't tolerate provocation.” As Lucknow oscillated between

vigilance and celebration, Operation Sindoor marked both a geopolitical statement and a moment of national unity. The city's response, marked by drills and discipline reflected a new phase of civil-military synergy.

Six of family killed in Jalaun crash

UP State Bureau JALAUN

A devastating road accident on NH-27 near Girthan village in Jalaun claimed six lives early Wednesday morning. A car carrying eight members of a family from Bahraich collided head-on with an oncoming truck after breaking the road divider around 5:30 am.

The deceased include Dr. Brijesh from Motipur, his wife Preeti, son Attashay, daughters Manvi and Siddika, and sister-in-law Sangeeta. Two others Dr. Brijesh's daughter Manda and Sangeeta's husband Ankit were critically injured and referred to Kanpur after initial treatment in the district hospital. Manvi died en route to Kanpur.

“Those who touched sindoor face erasure”



UP State Bureau LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday said “those who tried to touch the sindoor of India's daughters lost their bloodlines.” His remarks came while praising the military response to the recent Pahalgam terror attack during an emergency preparedness mock drill in Lucknow. Calling the Army's action “decisive,” the CM



UP State Bureau LUCKNOW

asserted that Operation Sindoor symbolised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's and the Indian Armed Forces' deep commitment to protecting women and the country's dignity. “No one will be allowed to tamper with the pride of the nation,” Yogi stated. He issued a stern warning that conspirators against Bharat Mata will face consequences. “The country comes first. Every locality, village, and city must be ready to respond when



UP State Bureau LUCKNOW

national security is threatened,” he said. Yogi also urged greater public participation in disaster and security response. “Not just NCC, Home Guards, or Scouts—every citizen must engage with security agencies and understand their responsibilities,” he added. The CM expressed gratitude to the three armed forces, PM Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and the Union Cabinet, offering condolences for those martyred in Pahalgam.



UP State Bureau LUCKNOW

Held at the Reserve Police Lines, the mock drill simulated enemy airstrikes and included coordinated responses from NDRF, SDRF, fire services, and medical teams. Citizens were taught how to shelter, treat the injured, and manage chemical threats. Minister Suresh Khanna, Home Secretary Sanjay Prasad, DGP Prashant Kumar, ADG Amitabh Yash, Commissioner Amarendra Sengar, and DM Vishakha G were among those present.

UP extends food licensing drive

UP State Bureau LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government has extended its ongoing statewide food registration and licensing campaign till May 31. Led by the Food Safety and Drug Administration (FSDA), the drive aims to bring all food business operators, from vendors to restaurants, under legal compliance.

Launched in April following Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's directive, the campaign mandates that every food business in the state must hold a valid registration or license under the Food Safety and Standards Act. Special camps are being held in every district to facilitate documentation. Food Safety Officers are conducting outreach and spot registration to ensure broad coverage. However, the government acknowledges that despite previous campaigns, large

All UP food businesses required to register by May 31 deadline

sections of the informal food sector remain unregistered, highlighting gaps in sustained monitoring. The FSDA has warned of strict enforcement after the May 31 deadline. The campaign includes awareness drives, compliance checks, and on-ground assistance for business owners. Though the CM has emphasized zero tolerance toward non-compliance, critics argue that periodic crackdowns alone may not build long-term adherence without addressing manpower constraints and lack of digital access in rural belts. Authorities state the campaign is intended not only for regulation but also to safeguard public health through clean, accountable food practices statewide.

Knife attack over sindoor talk

UP State Bureau SHAHJAHANPUR

In a disturbing incident in Shahjahanpur's Powayan, 12-year-old Surjeet, son of Lalbahadur from Dharmgadpur Khurd, was attacked with a knife by a man who grew agitated during a conversation about India's Operation Sindoor.

The attacker, reportedly from Katra Bazaar locality, also shouted pro-Pakistan slogans in the crowded vegetable market before being caught and handed over to police by bystanders.

The man's violent reaction appears rooted in personal instability and does not reflect the sentiments of any particular community.

25 lakh new farmers to get Kisan credit cards in UP soon

UP State Bureau LUCKNOW

In a major push to boost agricultural income and make farming more profitable, the Uttar Pradesh government under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is set to expand the reach of the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme. For the financial year 2025-26, the state aims to provide KCCs to 25 lakh new farmers, ensuring easier access to timely and affordable credit. The initiative builds on the success of the previous year, where over 71 lakh farmers across the state were issued Kisan Credit Cards. To meet the new target, the state has directed all Divisional Commissioners and District Magistrates to expedite the registration and distribution process.



Yogi government issues credit cards to over 71 lakh farmers in just one year

The government is prioritizing Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana beneficiaries for inclusion in the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme. With support from cooperative and commercial banks, the distribution process is being fast-tracked to ensure wider outreach. The Government of

India has also instructed all eligible farmers to be connected with KCCs to help them access crop loans and related financial services. The aim is to eliminate the need for farmers to rely on informal moneylenders by providing institutional credit at low interest rates. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has emphasized the need to transform agriculture into a profitable venture and uplift the standard of living in rural areas. The KCC scheme plays a key role in this mission by offering timely financial support to farmers and reinforcing the state's commitment to a self-reliant and prosperous agrarian economy. Under the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme, there has been an increase in the distribution of crop loans.

shaktirise

Minister Danish hails 'Operation Sindoor'

UP State Bureau LUCKNOW

Lucknow witnessed emotional scenes of unity and patriotism on Wednesday as students and teachers of Darul Uloom Farangi Mahal gathered at Aishbagh Eidgah to cheer the Indian Army's precision strikes under Operation Sindoor. The air resounded with slogans of “Hindustan Zindabad” and “Indian Army Zindabad,” as they waved the national flag in support of the armed forces.

The operation, carried out in response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, targeted nine terrorist camps in Pakistan and PoK. According to reports, several militants were neutralized.

Uttar Pradesh targets eco-religious tourism boom

UP State Bureau LUCKNOW

The UP government is moving ahead with plans to establish the state as a key eco and religious tourism hub, with projects underway in Lakhimpur Kheri to support both nature tourism and cultural engagement. Under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's leadership, infrastructure will be developed near Chandan Chowki and Sharda Barrage to support tent cities, water sports, eco lodges, and immersive experiences centered around the Tharu community.Two new hubs will

Eco lodges, glamping, water sports planned near Dudhwa, Sharda Barrage

cater to visitors of Dudhwa National Park and Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary. Cultural performances, homestays, and exhibitions will offer tourists deeper insight into Tharu life. The initiative is part of the state's broader tourism policy, which includes the Ramayana and Buddhist circuits and the 'One District, One Destination' scheme.

India’s daughters: The strength Pakistan can never comprehend

Pankaj Srivastava LUCKNOW

In the early hours of Wednesday, what the world witnessed wasn't merely an airstrike, it was a clear declaration of India's strategic might, unwavering vision, and iron-clad resolve. But what made this operation historic was not just its execution, it was the leaders behind it. This time, India's daughters led from the front not just as participants, but as commanding architects of the mission.

Women Behind the Strike Colonel Sophia Qureshi



Colonel Sophia Qureshi



Wing Commander Vyomika Singh

A name that resonates with pride across the Indian Armed Forces. She became the first Indian woman to lead an international military exercise, commanding troops from 18 different nations during the prestig-

ious 'Force 18' drills. Today, she stands as the strategic backbone of Operation Sindoor, a mission that shook Pakistan's defense structure to its core. Her leadership, vision, and grit played a pivotal role in

Not Just an Airstrike, A Declaration of Power, Vision, and Resolve

the operation's success.

Wing Commander Vyomika Singh A fearless officer in the Indian Air Force, Wing Commander Singh isn't just known for flying fighter jets she's known for leading them in complex missions with unflinching precision. Her aerial combat expertise and tactical

command turned the tide of Operation Sindoor, proving that the skies are no longer male territory they belong to every Indian who dares, especially our daughters.

India vs Pakistan: A Contrast in Mindset

In India, we entrust daughters with borders, commands, and national strategy. In Pakistan, women still struggle to access basic education, let alone enter the military. In India, a woman commands troops from 18 countries. In Pakistan, a man's silence is valued more than a woman's voice. That is the difference. One nation

This is India

- Where daughters don't just dream they achieve.
- Where they don't just march they lead.
- Where they don't just guard the borders they become the shield of the nation.

As the world watches, India's daughters are proving that strength isn't always measured in missiles and machines sometimes, it's measured in courage, competence, and commitment.

empowers its daughters. The other hides them behind curtains.

India's daughters are no longer bound by societal chains they're now breaking barriers,

commanding missions, and scripting history. This isn't just a moment of pride; it's a message to the world a country that trusts its women can never be defeated.

EMOTIONALLY SUPERCHARGED RESPONSES

Ramachandran's daughter hails Operation Sindoor

Arathy, the daughter of N Ramachandran, who was tragically killed by terrorists in Pahalgam, Kashmir, expressed strong support for the Indian Army's newly launched "Operation Sindoor". Speaking to the media on Wednesday, Arathy voiced her hopes that this initiative would provide some solace to the families who, like hers, have suffered from the brutalities of terrorism.

Arathy, whose father's death left an indelible mark on her family, acknowledged that the operation signifies more than just military action. She described it as a powerful response from the women of India, reflecting the collective resolve to confront the menace of terrorism.

Arathy's father, N Ramachandran, was among the many innocent lives lost during terrorist attacks in the



Kashmir Valley. While the operation's immediate impact remains to be fully assessed, Arathy's words re-

flected a sentiment shared by numerous families who have lost loved ones in similar circumstances. The pain of such loss is often compounded by the feeling that justice is elusive, and the perpetrators remain unpunished. For these families, Operation Sindoor offers a glimmer of hope that action will be taken, and justice may be served.

"We've seen the destruction caused by these terrorists in our lives. My father's death is a constant reminder of the harsh reality faced by thousands of families like mine. I believe this operation will help bring closure to many of us," said Arathy. Her call for justice echoes the demands of families across India who have been victims of cross-border terrorism. Arathy's father Ramachandran was gunned down in front of her. eyes.

Actors salute heroes

Actors Mammooty and Mohanlal have publicly endorsed India's military response to the Pahalgam terror attack.

Mammooty expressed



his support on social media, stating, "Salute to our heroes. Operation Sindoor once again proves that the Indian Army will listen to the call when the country calls. Thank you for saving lives and ke-

eping hope alive. You are raising the pride of the country to the sky, Jai Hind."

Mohanlal also voiced his sentiments, saying, "We



wear sindoor not just as a tradition, but as a symbol of our unwavering resolve. Challenge us and we will rise, fearless and stronger than ever. Salute to every brave heart of the Indian Army, Navy, Air Force "

Mock drills at 126 centres in 14 districts

HD Bureau
KOCHI

At 4:00 PM on Wednesday, all 14 districts of Kerala activated a coordinated civil defence mock drill, aligning with the Union Home Ministry's directive under Operation Abhyaas. This nationwide exercise, the most extensive since the 1971 India-Pakistan war, aims to assess and enhance civilian preparedness in the wake of escalating tensions between India and Pakistan following the Pahalgam attack on April 22.

The Kerala State Disaster Management Authority spearheaded the operation, integrating air-raid siren tests, evacuation simulations, and public awareness campaigns. Chief Secretary Dr. A. Jayathilak urged citizens, institutions, and organisations to participate actively, emphasising vigilance and the importance of not succumbing to panic.

The drills are part of a broader national strategy involving 244 districts across the country. In Kerala, the exercise included the operational testing of sirens installed at 86 locations, primarily schools and government buildings. Of these, 83 functioned satisfactorily, while three experienced technical issues, which are

being addressed. These sirens are part of the Kerala Warnings Crisis and Hazard Management system, designed to disseminate information and issue warnings effectively during crises.

In Kerala, mock drills were conducted across all 14 districts, with the state government urging public cooperation and preparedness.

The civil defence apparatus has been actively involved in various disaster response operations. For instance, during the landslides in Chooralmala and Mundakkai, civil defence teams played a crucial role in rescue operations, highlighting their importance in disaster response.

Additionally, mock drills have been conducted to assess tsunami preparedness in coastal regions like Alappad and Valiyaparamba, aiming to certify these areas as 'tsunami-ready' based on various indicators such as evacuation route maps and awareness classes.

The state's commitment to disaster preparedness is further exemplified by the mock drill conducted to assess flood preparedness in

Thiruvananthapuram, where a hypothetical flood situation was created in five panchayats, including Chenkal, Poovachal, Velland, Kadakkavoor, and Kochi.

'Sindoor over Pakistan'

Union Minister Suresh Gopi, speaking at the Thrissur Pooram festival, defended India's surgical strike, stating that the operation was a necessary measure to protect national security and prevent future terrorist attacks. He emphasised that the strikes were not acts of revenge but steps taken in accordance with international norms to safeguard citizens. "Thrissur Pooram filled the sky with myriad colours, Operation Sindoor sprayed sindoor over Pakistan," the politician-turned actor said.



Only the initial phase, feels Antony

Veteran Congress leader and former Union Minister for Defence A.K. Antony has marked Operation Sindoor as only the initial phase in a broader strategy against terrorist camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Antony's remarks, made on May 7, 2025, raise important questions about the trajectory of India's counterterrorism efforts and the potential for escalating military actions in the region.

While acknowledging the significance of Operation Sindoor, which targeted several extremist camps,

Antony framed the operation as just the beginning. His statement has amplified speculation about the next steps in India's ongoing military strategy and whether more extensive actions are on the horizon.

Many analysts believe that his remarks reflect the government's broader strategy of strengthening its offensive capabilities. If this approach gains momentum, it could signal a more aggressive posture in dealing with groups operating in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.ic discussions.



UNITED FRONT | 'A' and 'T' groups, historically influential within the Kerala Congress, have united in their criticism of the current leadership

Leadership crisis intensifies as Sudhakaran refuses to budge

HD Bureau
KOCHI

A leadership impasse within the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee has intensified, with party president K Sudhakaran resisting pressure from the All India Congress Committee to step down. Sudhakaran's refusal, bolstered by support from senior leaders, has escalated tensions within the party, prompting concerns about the unity of the United Democratic Front ahead of upcoming elections.

Sudhakaran has publicly dismissed reports of a leadership change as spec-

ulative, asserting his commitment to the party's directives. He emphasized that no official communication from the AICC has requested his resignation, stating, "If they ask me to step down, I will obey their command as a loyal and obedient party worker." This stance has been met with both support and opposition within the party ranks.

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor has voiced strong support for Sudhakaran, highlighting the party's electoral successes under his leadership. Tharoor noted that the Congress secured significant victories



in the 2024 general elections and subsequent bypolls, arguing that there is no justification for a change in leadership. "Let him continue. Everyone should stand together with him," Tharoor

stated, reinforcing the call for unity within the party.

However, internal divisions persist, with factions within the KPCC expressing dissatisfaction over the selection of block unit presi-

dents and alleging a lack of consultation in decision-making processes. The 'A' and 'T' groups, historically influential within the Kerala Congress, have united in their criticism of the current leadership, accusing Sudhakaran and Opposition Leader V D Satheesan of sidelining senior leaders and consolidating power without broader consensus. In response to the escalating discord, the AICC has initiated efforts to mediate and restore cohesion within the Kerala Congress. A high-level committee comprising key figures, including Sudhakaran, Satheesan, UDF Co-

nvenor M M Hassan, senior leader Ramesh Chennithala, AICC General Secretary K C Venugopal, and General Secretary in charge of Kerala Deepa Dasmunshi, has been formed to address the internal conflicts and strategize for upcoming elections. Dasmunshi has actively engaged with UDF partners, seeking to reassure allies of the Congress's commitment to unity and collaborative decision-making. Despite these interventions, the leadership crisis remains unresolved, with Sudhakaran's faction demanding the replacement of Dasmunshi, citing her controversial role.

Sarin gets a job!

HD Bureau
KOCHI

Dr P Sarin, a former Congress leader who recently joined the Communist Party of India, has been appointed as the advisor to Vigyan Kerala, a significant development in the political landscape of the state. The appointment is marked by the offer of a monthly salary of ₹80,000 for his advisory role.

Sarin, who was previ-



ously the convenor of the Kerala Pradesh Congress

Committee Digital Media Cell, made headlines when he shifted allegiance from Congress to CPM during the Palakkad by-election. His move has drawn attention, with political analysts seeing it as a noteworthy shift in Kerala's political dynamics. Sarin's decision to leave Congress and align with the ruling CPM has been widely discussed, particularly in light of his electoral performance.

Murmu's Sabarimala visit a milestone

HD Bureau
KOCHI

President Droupadi Murmu's upcoming visit to the Sabarimala temple in Kerala on May 19 is poised to be a defining moment in the temple's history. The two-day trip, which is set to place the President at the revered hill shrine, comes at a time when Sabarimala has significantly bolstered its position as a prominent spiritual and religious hub, both within India and globally. Managed by the Travancore



Devaswom Board, the Sabarimala temple has always been at the heart of a unique

religious and cultural tradition. P S Prashanth, President of the TDB, remarked

that this visit by the head of state will be "a milestone in the overall development of Sabarimala," underscoring the importance of the visit at a time when the temple's stature continues to rise. This will not be the first time a sitting president visits the shrine, as President V V Giri had made a similar visit decades ago. However, this particular visit holds special significance in the modern context, with the temple's increasing prominence and the larger developments surrounding its infrastructure. Sabarimala, dedicated to

Lord Ayyappa, attracts millions of devotees annually, particularly during the Mandala-Makaravilakk u pilgrimage season. Its prominence has only grown in the last few decades, with a steady increase in the number of devotees travelling to the hilltop temple from all parts of India and beyond. The temple's location, at a challenging altitude, and the pilgrimage's long-standing traditions, including stringent rituals and fasting, make it a distinct and revered spiritual journey for many.. The Sabarimala pi-

offgrid

Elephant rampage mars Pooram fireworks show

HD Bureau
KOCHI

At least 42 people were injured when an elephant went on a rampage during the Thrissur Pooram celebrations in the early morning of Wednesday. The incident unfolded around 2:15 a.m. on Pandi Samooha Madam Road, near Swaraj Round, where a large crowd had gathered to enjoy the renowned fireworks display. The elephant, Uttoly Raman, part of the procession

organised by Thiruvambady Devaswom, suddenly turned aggressive, triggering widespread panic.

The chaos erupted as the 25-year-old tusker broke free from its handlers and began charging through the crowd. Those closest to the animal were struck or knocked over as people scrambled for cover in the dark, chaotic streets. Emergency responders and local authorities rushed to the scene to manage the si-

tuation.

The animal's violent outburst disrupted the lively festivities of the Pooram, one of Kerala's most famous cultural events, held annually at the Vadakunnathan Temple in Thrissur. The firework display, a highlight of the event, was temporarily halted as authorities focused on containing the elephant and ensuring the safety of the attendees.

Uttoly Raman, a seasoned elephant known for his



calm demeanour, was part of the Thiruvambady Devaswom's elephant squad, which traditionally participates in the grand procession during the Pooram festival. Witnesses reported that the animal appeared agitated, though the reasons for the sudden outburst remain unclear. Experts have suggested that loud noises from the fireworks, a dense crowd, and the intense pressure of the procession may have contributed to the elephant's

unexpected behaviour.

The injured were quickly taken to nearby hospitals for treatment, with some suffering minor to moderate injuries, while others sustained more serious trauma. Local authorities confirmed that the elephant was safely restrained by the Elephant Squad, which consists of experienced handlers skilled in managing animals in such situations.

Uttoly Raman's aggressive behaviour has raised fresh

concerns over the safety measures surrounding elephants used in festivals. Elephants play a significant role in the cultural and religious life of Kerala, especially during major events like Pooram. However, experts have long voiced concerns about the conditions under which these animals are kept and the risks involved in using them for such public spectacles.

The incident has reignited the debate over the treatment of elephants in

festivals across Kerala. While they are considered sacred and are revered in the state's religious traditions, the practice of parading elephants during major festivals has faced growing criticism. Animal rights activists argue that the loud noises, overcrowding, and extended hours of work cause significant stress to the elephants, potentially leading to dangerous situations like the one that occurred during Thrissur Pooram.



The Free Press Journal
Founder Editor: S Sadanand

Action, reaction & a lesson

The destruction of nine terrorist camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK) by India on Wednesday has once again demonstrated Delhi's firm commitment to fight terrorism on its soil and act against those who target Indians. The Indian action came in response to the April 22 terrorist attack in Pahalgam in Kashmir, in which 26 innocent tourists were brutally killed by operatives of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). The military action, codenamed Operation Sindoor, symbolising the sacred vermilion of a married Hindu woman, was a signal to those widows who saw their husbands being killed in front of their eyes and also to Pakistan that the Indian government will punish those responsible for their killing. The military action, however, avoided targeting civilians and Pakistan's military installations, making it clear that India does not want to encourage a wider conflict.

In a pre-dawn, tri-service coordinated action called Operation Sindoor, the armed forces launched 24 missiles against precise terrorists' locations in Pakistan and territories under its control to demolish the camps. Nearly 70 terrorists were reportedly killed in the missile attack. The entire operation lasted less than 25 minutes. Most of the dead were members of the terrorist organisations Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohamed, who have been responsible for targeting Indian assets and citizens over the years. The action against Pakistan came amid calls for restraint from key world leaders. India's decision to go ahead with its objective, ignoring such calls, indicates that despite its respect for global opinion, its primary responsibility was the safety and security of its people.

India waited for nearly two weeks, informing world leaders about Pakistan's complicity and its pursuance of cross-border terrorism as a foreign policy tool against India. It hoped Islamabad would punish the perpetrators and assure Delhi it would not encourage such acts in future by taking visible action in dismantling its terrorist infrastructures. Instead, Pakistan denied its involvement and attacked India for creating a war hysteria between the two countries while playing to the outside world's apprehension that an India-Pakistan armed conflict can deteriorate to a nuclear conflagration. This left India with little choice but to take action against the terrorists and their backers in Pakistan. India also had credible intelligence that Pakistan was gathering more terrorists at the camps to carry out similar attacks in Kashmir and other parts of India. The action was, therefore, both pre-emptive and punishing to those involved in the Pahalgam attack.

The Indian foreign minister S. Jaishankar has briefed the leaders of the United States, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Russia. The Iranian foreign minister Seyed Abbas Aragachi, who arrived in Delhi on Wednesday, was briefed by the Indian foreign minister. Besides, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also discussed the evolving situation with leaders of the five countries in the past few days.

The death of the 26 civilians was the largest number of civilian casualties since the November 26, 2008, attacks in Mumbai. The brutal killing of the innocent tourists in front of their family was clearly driven by the objectives of disrupting tourism, the mainstay of the local economy, and derailing the normalcy that was being restored in the Union Territory through development and growth.

Last year, over 23 million tourists from different parts of India visited Jammu and Kashmir, in addition to about 40,000 foreigners. The killing of the tourists was a signal to the rest of India that the area was not safe for visiting. Another objective was to tell the world that despite India's claim, Jammu and Kashmir remained a disturbed area and local people were desperate to seek independence from Indian rule. The aim was to ensure the region remained a fertile ground for continued cross-border terrorism from Pakistan by keeping it backward and disturbed. The attack was also driven by an objective to provoke communal violence in Jammu and Kashmir and the rest of India. However, because of the government and the people, such designs were foiled.

A group called the Resistance Front (TRF) claimed responsibility for the attack. However, it was a front for the LeT, a UN-proscribed Pakistani terrorist group. The Indian investigation teams had also found, through communication nodes of terrorists and other evidence after the Pahalgam attack, their link to Pakistan.

India must continue to exert pressure on Pakistan at the international stage through sustained campaigning. Pakistan has a long tradition of indulging in cross-border terrorism against India and has a reputation for being a safe haven for terrorists from around the world. It has wilfully misled the world leaders at international forums, like the Financial Action Task Force, about harbouring terrorists. India should also maintain economic pressure on Pakistan. Credit agency Moody says Pakistan's IMF loan in the future could be affected if it engages in a long war.

A long war is not desirable, but world opinion must be against Pakistan to force it to give up its policy of using terrorism as a tool against its neighbour. Otherwise, India could come up with a much stronger response against Pakistan in future.



Neighbourly Eye

K C SINGH

Two weeks after the Pahalgam terror attack, India finally retaliated by launching air attacks against 9 targets. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, in his press statement, emphasised India choosing non-military targets linked to Pakistan's terror machine.

Since India's 2019 Balakot attack, after the Pulwama suicide bombing of Indian paramilitary personnel, Delhi assumed that Pakistan had been finally deterred from sponsoring terrorism. The abrogation of Article 370 and the division and downgrading of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories, followed by an extended President's rule, fanned Indian complacency that terrorism stood defeated.

These smug conclusions rested on two flawed presumptions. One, the conclusion that an economically beleaguered Pakistan was preoccupied with domestic political instability and terrorism emanating from Balochistan and Afghanistan; and two, that a weakening Pakistani state meant its army was also handicapped. However, that was never so, as China props up Pakistan as a

counterweight to India in South Asia. Pakistan, if anything, has upgraded its air force and army. With India allocating resources to counter China across the Line of Actual Control, its residual military resources do not greatly outweigh those of Pakistan, except in the naval domain.

Before Pahalgam, multiple warning signs were aflutter that some mischief could be expected from the Pakistan army. Pakistan had blamed India and Afghanistan for the March hijacking of a train by militants of the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA). Then came the completely unhinged public speech by army chief General Asim Munir, reviving the discarded 2-nation theory, which died when Bangladesh was created in 1972. His terming "Kashmir" as Pakistan's "jugular vein" indicated that they were again preparing to mainstream internationally the Kashmir issue. The general having conspired to detain mass leader Imran Khan indefinitely, the Sharif government is his puppet. The director general of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has just been also designated as the National Security Advisor. This means the army now has its representative directly ad-

vising the cabinet. All pretences of civil control over the military are jettisoned.

On the Indian side, General Munir correctly assumed that a BJP-led government would not but retaliate after the brutal, communal and close-quarter killing of 26 males. The Pakistani army is generally good at tactical surprise, like in the case of the Kargil intrusion. They lack strategic perception of how their antagonist may react. They rely on the nuclear bluff to stymie India from broadening retaliation. The Modi government, like that of Vajpayee in 1999, has called the Pakistani bluff. This time the targets include not only most training camps of Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir but also their declared headquarters at Muridke and Bahawalpur, respectively.

In both places, the terror outfits have created charitable institutions, providing education and healthcare. That earns them public goodwill, facilitates recruitment and enables fund collection abroad, especially in the Gulf. The facade also becomes a protective shield against scrutiny of their real motives and actions. India came

close to attacking Muridke after the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai, but the US was still in Afghanistan and hunting for Osama bin Laden. Their pressure and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's pacifist instincts held India back. India chose instead to use the international route to name and shame Pakistan. The UN Security Council's listing of global terrorists was also employed, despite Chinese foot-dragging. That process has just obtained for India the custody of Tahawwur Rana, co-conspirator with David Headley. That may also be a motivating factor for the Pakistan army's urgency to create a major distraction, as his revelations will uncover ISI's direct complicity in 26/11.

In 2019, President Donald Trump played a vital role in de-escalating the situation quickly. In his present incarnation, he is totally enmeshed in the global trade chaos that he has churned. He also has Ukraine and Gaza conflicts already choking his claimed diplomatic prowess. China, for the same reason, may actually be against the South Asian conflict escalating. It needs India as a potential market, probably assuming that Trump will not easily back off.

What then can happen next? Pakistan will certainly retaliate. It can be mostly symbolic, like in 2019, with LoC firing already taking a toll. Its problem is target selection. India does not have terrorist training camps breeding anti-Pakistan militancy. It has also seen India beginning to weaponise river waters, which is an existential threat. If it targets military facilities, then escalation is inevitable. If it goes after the run-of-river projects on Chenab and Jhelum, that too would cross India's red lines.

Pakistani generals lose jobs after tactical mistakes. President Pervez Musharraf's coup followed an attempt to replace him. Unfortunately, with the degradation of the position of America as an arbiter in such situations, the off-ramps look shaky. Pakistan has to back off from resumed sponsorship of terror against India. India needs to restore deterrence. But this time, unlike in 2019, India also needs, once calm returns, to open dialogue with Pakistan. Shutting all doors has proven as risky as appeasement. Diplomacy must find a middle path.

KC Singh is former secretary, Ministry of External Affairs.

The conflicts and challenges of being Catwoman

In the male-dominated world of comic book characters, Catwoman stands tall as a proto-feminist, both vampish and heroic at once



HerStory

DEEPA GAHLOT

In a comic book populated mainly by male superheroes, Catwoman is an intriguing character—both vampish and heroic. She made her debut in 1940 and has held her mystique for 85 years.

Catwoman was ranked 11th on Image Game Network's list of the Top 100 Comic Book Villains of All Time, and 51st on Wizard magazine's 100 Greatest Villains of All Time list; she was ranked 20th on IGN's Top 100 Comic Book Heroes of All Time list. This not only marks her popularity but also indicates a complexity to her character, not usually granted to comic book females.

Created by Bill Finger and Bob Kane, The Cat appeared in the first Batman comic in 1940 and went on to become one of his rogues' gallery of adversaries. Interestingly, she was also his love interest. Of course, there was sexism built into the comic book universe aimed at adolescent males.

Catwoman, the alter ego of Selina Kyle, was drawn dressed in a skintight bodysuit and given a bullwhip as a weapon. In those modest times, the sexual connotations of her slinky, whip-wielding persona were not lost on anyone, and the character was forced by the Comics Code Authority to vanish from 1954 to 1966, in keeping

with the rules regarding the portrayal of women in comic books. The code was eventually dropped, and Catwoman returned.

Inspired by Bollywood femme fatales like Jean Harlow and Hedy Lamarr, Kane and Finger wanted to give their comic book sex appeal (though the catsuit came much later) and also appeal to female readers—according to Bob Kane's book Batman And Me (1989), they wanted to give Batman a "friendly foe who committed crimes but was also a romantic interest in Batman's rather sterile life."

Why a cat? He wrote, "I felt that women were feline creatures and men were more like dogs. While dogs are faithful and friendly, cats are cool, detached, and unreliable. I felt much warmer with dogs around me—cats are as hard to understand as women are. Men feel more sure of themselves with a male friend than a woman. You always need to keep women at arm's length. We don't want anyone taking over our souls, and women have a habit of doing that. So there's a love-resentment thing with women. I guess women will feel that I'm being chauvinistic to speak this way, but I do feel that I've had better relationships with male friends than women. With women, once the romance is over, somehow they never remain my friends."



Michelle Pfeiffer as Catwoman. The character made its debut in 1940.

The character underwent many dramatic changes in her journey, and in 1993, Catwoman was given her first own comic series, with Jim Balent as the main writer with others, who gave her a backstory as a teenage runaway, her time in a juvenile detention home, a female sidekick and her training with another DC Comics character, Ted 'Wildcat' Grant.

Inevitably, the feminist potential of the character was noted, and dozens of magazine articles, books and papers were written on her. There is also criticism of the hypersexualized portrayal and the clichéd negative stereotyping of

women as cats. Gloria Steinem commented that Catwoman "is a feminist superhero with a storyline and transformation of her own—plus class consciousness, a girl buddy, equal skills with the Batman equipment and an apartment of her own."

Making an appearance on television in 1966, she was played by the six-foot tall Julie Newmar in a black Lurex catsuit with cat ears and a low-slung golden belt. Catwoman, says Julie Newmar, quoted in a piece by Allison Keyes in npr.org, is comprised of the "most delicious" human traits—determined, calculating, and wise. And

that catsuit? "You feel more power," she said, "You're both hidden and exposed at the same time. You're hidden by the black; you're exposed by the tightness of the outfit. You have on these high heels, long nails, and then your eyelashes—your hair!"

Catwoman has been played by many actresses over the years, among them Lee Meriwether in Batman (1966), Michelle Pfeiffer in Batman Returns (1992), Halle Berry in Catwoman (2004), Anne Hathaway in The Dark Knight Rises (2012), and Zoe Kravitz in The Batman (2022). On television, she has been played by Julie Newmar, Eartha Kitt, Carmen Bicondova and Lili Simmons. All of them have interpreted the character in their own way.

Suzanne Colon, author of Catwoman: The Life and Times of Feline Fatale, wrote, "This was one of the first female characters we saw on television that really spoke to empowerment. Not only empowerment: a proto-feminism that was very sexy and pretty and female, and yet very take-charge. This woman had her own gang of men who wore little cat ears... to please her." Any woman who can manage that is definitely a superhero!

Deepa Gahlot is a Mumbai-based columnist, critic and author.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Vizhinjam Port

The Vizhinjam Port, recently inaugurated by PM Modi, is the cynosure these days. It is India's first deep-water transshipment container port, located in Thiruvananthapuram. The Vizhinjam Port will definitely help India improve its transshipment reach in the Indian Ocean. Till now, the privilege of docking deep-sea container ships at such a strategic point in the Indian Ocean was enjoyed only by Sri Lanka's Colombo port. With the formation of Vizhinjam Port, one can dock heavy vessels between Jebel Ali and Colombo easily.

Kirti Wadhawan, Kanpur

Pak must comply

In the interest of regional stability and its own long-term security, it is imperative that Pakistan takes credible and irreversible action to dismantle all terrorist infrastructure operating from its territory against India. This expectation is not unilateral; it is firmly supported by several members of the United Na-

tions Security Council, who have consistently underscored the collective responsibility to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

P.V. Prakash, Mumbai

Hate no more

Himanshi, the wife of Lt Gen Vinay Narwal, who was killed in the Pahalgam attack, is being trolled severely on social media for saying that she did not "want anyone to hate anyone. People are going against Muslims, we do not want this". But people who do politics of hate don't get this. They neither have any connection with the country nor humanity. The government should not only catch the trolls but also punish them hard. By giving in to hatred, we will only be helping Pakistan realise its agenda of creating anarchy in the country.

Hema Hari Upadhyay, Ujjain

Salute to Indian armed forces

As a citizen of India, I strongly feel that national



Man's conflict with the cheetah

The authorities must segregate residential areas from forest land using unscalable electric fences fitted with CC cameras and electronic buzzers. Floodlights and drones, along with armed guards, should be used to keep round-the-clock vigilance so that people don't trespass into the protected area. Additionally, technology by way of microchips, radio collars and leg bands should be used to stop wild animals and birds from being poached.

Peter Castellino, Mumbai

unity and solidarity are the needs of the hour, and we, the people of India, must stand with our armed forces. The Indian armed forces carried out missile attacks on terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-oc-

cupied Kashmir (PoK) in the early hours of Wednesday. We are extremely proud of the Indian armed forces, who have struck terror camps in Pakistan and PoK, and applaud their resolute resolve and courage.

Bhagwan Thadani, Mumbai

Welcome Carney

The Indian immigrants who saw Canada under Trudeau understand well what separatism is all about. It was almost a free run for the fringe group fearlessly advocating their prominence and their muscle to handle voices against them. Now, with Mark Carney at the helm and his clear stance against extremist elements operating on Canadian soil, things might change for the better.

Manish Shukla, Kota

Dragon's roar

Many Chinese netizens are using social media to express their anger against the US. Hashtags like 'Oppose American Hegemony' are trending on Chinese platforms such as Weibo, TikTok, and WeChat. Anti-American memes, satire, and caricatures are going viral. China has been trading globally long before America even existed. While the wars in Ukraine

and Gaza dominate headlines, today's most discussed conflict is the trade war initiated by the US. Patriotic and anti-American sentiments are rising among the Chinese public, with calls to boycott US products and charge American customers premium prices.

Dattaprasad Shirodkar, Mumbai

Grandma's tales

Memories of my grandmother's bedtime stories may have faded, but the ones I tell my grandchildren remain fresh. New stories are created daily, yet my grandson always asks for the same one, perhaps because it touches a deep chord of bonding. Indian tales, deeply tied to family relationships and cultural identity, strengthen emotional bonds and reflect collectivist values. They emphasise humility, selflessness, and spiritual wisdom, contrasting with the individualism seen in modern tales.

R. Narayanan, Navi Mumbai

Briefs

SAN DIEGO
5 booked after migrant boat capsizes

Federal officials filed charges Tuesday against five people in connection to a boat carrying migrants that capsized a day earlier off San Diego's Pacific coast, killing three people, including a 14-year-old boy from India. The boy's 10-year-old sister is still missing at sea and is presumed dead, the US Attorney's Office in San Diego said in a statement. Their parents were among four people who were injured and taken to the hospital, including the father, who is in a coma. The other two killed were from Mexico, including an 18-year-old boy and another man, according to the Mexican consulate.

TOKYO
Man stabs 2 at subway station

A man with a knife slashed two passengers on a train stopping at a Tokyo subway station during the evening rush on Wednesday, and their injuries were not believed to be life-threatening, Japanese police and media reported. The 43-year-old suspect was arrested at the scene on suspicion of attempted murder, Tokyo's metropolitan police said. The suspect's motives and other details were not immediately known.

ESCALATING WAR | Schools sheltering hundreds of displaced Palestinians attacked as the conflict enters its 20th month

59 killed in Gaza as Israel set to ramp up offensive

Agencies
GAZA STRIP

Israeli strikes across Gaza killed at least 59 people, including women and children, hospital officials said Wednesday, as Israel prepares to ramp up its campaign against Hamas in a devastating war now entering its 20th month.

The strikes included one attack on Tuesday night on a school sheltering hundreds of displaced Palestinians, which killed 27 people, officials from the Al-Aqsa Hospital said, including nine women and three children. It was the fifth time since the war began that the school in central Gaza has been struck.

An early morning strike on another school turned shelter in Gaza City killed 16 people, according to officials at Al-Ahli Hospital, while strikes on targets in other areas killed at least 16 others.

A large column of smoke rose and fires pierced the dark skies above the school shelter in Bureij, a built-up urban refugee camp. Paramedics and rescuers rushed to pull people out from the blaze.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment on the strikes. Israel blames Hamas for the death toll because it operates from civilian infrastructure, including schools.

The new bloodshed comes days after Israel approved a



'Only 21 hostages alive': Trump draws Israel's ire

The war began when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking about 250 hostages. Israel's offensive has killed more than 52,000 people in Gaza, many of them women and children, according to Palestinian health officials. The officials do not distinguish between combatants and civilians in their count.

Trump on Tuesday

stunned many in Israel when he declared that only 21 of the 59 hostages remaining in Gaza are still alive. Israel insists that figure stands at 24, although an Israeli official said there was "serious concern" for the lives of three captives. The official said there has been no sign of life from those three, whom the official did not identify.

He said that until there is

evidence proving otherwise, the three are considered to be alive.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive details related to the war, said the families of the captives were updated on those developments.

Hamas says it is prepared to release all of the hostages for an end to the war and a long term truce with Israel.

of thousands of reserve soldiers to carry out the plan. Israel says the plan will be gradual and will not be implemented until after US President Donald Trump wraps up his visit to the region later this month.

Any escalation of fighting would likely drive up the

death toll. And with Israel already controlling some 50% of Gaza, increasing its hold on the territory, for an indefinite amount of time, could open up the potential for a military occupation, which would raise questions about how Israel plans to have the territory governed.

Putin completes 25 yrs in Russia hot seat and still going strong

Agencies
MOSCOW

Exactly 25 years ago on May 7, an obscure ex-KGB colonel Vladimir Putin -- with little public exposure as deputy mayor of St Petersburg -- took the oath of the highest office in the post-Communist Russia.

A quarter century later, Putin, 72, still remains the most popular politician in Russia, as was evident by last year's election, which Putin won with 88.48 per cent of votes polled.

In a TV documentary shown on Sunday, he, however, said that he was looking for a successor, but it was not in his power as the successor would have to seek a popular vote in the elections with strong rivals.

For Putin, it has been a 25-year journey that has come to coincide with Russia's journey in the 21st century.

His predecessor Boris Yeltsin, Russia's first directly elected president, had resigned due to failing health on the backdrop of political instability, financial and economic, militancy in the Northern Caucasus and a spate of terrorist attacks. He handed Putin, the incumbent prime minister of the country, the hot Kremlin seat on New Year's Eve, December 31, 1999.

Putin was elected on March 26, 2000, bagging 53 per cent votes by beating Communist rival Gennady Zyuganov and liberal Yabloko block leader Grigory Yavlinsky in "reasonably free and fair" polls, according to a declassified US



Biden's 'appeasement' dig at Trump

London: Joe Biden said in his first post-presidential interview that President Donald Trump's pressure on Ukraine to give up territory to Russia amounts to "modern-day appeasement," a historically fraught term that refers to a failed effort to stop the Nazis from annexing land in Europe in the 1930s. Biden told BBC Radio 4s "Today" program in remarks aired on Wednesday that Trump's statements about acquiring Panama, Greenland and Canada have bred distrust in Europe. He also said it was a "difficult decision" to leave the US presidential race in 2024.

Russian attack kills 2 in Ukraine

Kyiv: Russia launched a ballistic missile and a barrage of drones at Ukraine's capital before dawn on Wednesday, killing at least two people in apartment buildings, Ukrainian officials said. Eight people were also wounded in the attack, including four children, the Kyiv City Military Administration said in a post on Telegram. The attack came before Russia's planned unilateral 72-hour ceasefire in the more than three-year war to coincide with celebrations in Moscow marking Victory Day in World War II. The US has proposed a 30-day ceasefire, which Ukraine has accepted, but the Kremlin has held out for ceasefire terms more to its liking.

Embassy cable from Moscow in 2024.

The way Putin resolutely fought Chechen militancy, assured timely pensions to the most vulnerable section of society, revived manufacturing in the country, generating employment, ensured a sec-

ond term with almost 72 per cent votes.

Due to constitutional restraint of two four-year consecutive terms, he stepped aside and took over the job of prime minister under President Dmitry Medvedev for four years.

US loses fighter jet as landing on aircraft carrier goes awry

Agencies
DUBAI

An F/A-18 fighter jet landing on the USS Harry S Truman aircraft carrier in the Red Sea went overboard, forcing its two pilots to eject, a defence official told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

The incident Tuesday marks the latest mishap to mar the deployment of the Truman, which has been essential in the airstrike campaign by the United States against Yemen's Houthi rebels.

On Tuesday, US President Donald Trump and Oman's foreign minister both said that a ceasefire had been reached with the Houthis, who would no longer target ships in the Red Sea corridor - something not immediately acknowledged by the rebels.

Meanwhile, the Houthis continue to assess the damage after daytime Israeli airstrikes targeted Yemen's rebel-held capital of Sanaa.

The F/A-18 Super Hornet landed on the Truman after a



flight, but "the arrestment failed," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorised to speak publicly about the incident now under investigation.

"Arrestment" refers to the hook system used by aircraft landing on carriers, which catches steel wire ropes on the flight deck. It remains unclear what part of the system failed.

The two pilots on board were later rescued by a helicopter and suffered minor injuries in the incident, the official added. No one on the flight deck was hurt.

Tuesday's incident was the latest to see the Navy lose an F/A-18, which cost about \$60 million. In April, another F/A-18 fighter jet slipped off the hangar deck of the Truman and fell into the Red Sea. The crew members who were in the pilot seat of the Super Hornet and on the small towing tractor both jumped away.

In December, the guided-missile cruiser USS Gettysburg mistakenly shot down an F/A-18 after ships earlier shot down multiple Houthi drones and an anti-ship cruise missile launched by the rebels. Both aviators in that incident also survived.

US, China officials to meet in Switzerland for tariff negotiations

Agencies
WASHINGTON

Top US officials are set to meet with a high-level Chinese delegation this weekend in Switzerland, the administration announced Tuesday, in the first major talks between the two nations since President Donald Trump sparked a trade war with stiff tariffs on imports.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and trade representative Jamieson Greer will meet with their counterparts in Geneva in the most-senior known conversations between the two countries in months. It comes amid growing US market worry over the impact of the tariffs on the prices and supply of consumer goods.

Trump had claimed previously that the US and China were holding negotiations on lowering tariffs, which Beijing has denied, saying

Trump must first lower his stiff tariffs. Bessent earlier Tuesday testified to a House committee that the US and China "have not engaged in negotiations" but "as early as this week," the US will be announcing trade deals with some of the US' largest trading partners.

The Chinese Commerce Ministry on Tuesday confirmed the meeting between the vice premier and Bessent in Switzerland.

"The Chinese side carefully evaluated the information from the US side and decided to agree to have contact with the US side after fully considering global expectations, Chinese interests and calls from US businesses and consumers," said a ministry spokesperson.

Bessent and Greer also plan to meet with Swiss President Karin Keller-Sutter, according to readouts from their respective offices.

Auction of Buddha gems stalled after India threats

Agencies
HONG KONG

Sotheby's on Wednesday postponed an auction of jewels associated with Buddha's remains after the Indian government opposed the sale and demanded it be halted.

The gems for auction were found buried together in reliquaries with the corporeal relics of the historical Buddha and discovered in northern India in 1898, the auction house said. They dated back to around 240-200 BC, it said.

But India's Ministry of Culture said in a Facebook post on Tuesday it had issued a legal notice to Sotheby's Hong Kong to demand the immediate halt of the sale, accusing the auction of violating "Indian laws, international norms and UN conventions." In its letter to Sotheby's Hong Kong dated Monday, posted on Facebook, it said the auction involves sacred Buddhist relics that constitute the inalienable religious and cultural heritage of India and the global Buddhist community. It demanded the repatriation of the relics to the Indian government and a public apology from the auction house and Chris Peppé.

Peppé is a great-grandson of British William Peppé, who excavated the relics.

The Indian government warned in the letter that failure to comply would result in legal actions.

Canadian PM says talks with Trump constructive despite no tariffs lifting



Agencies
OTTAWA

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said that he had wide-ranging and constructive discussions with US President Donald Trump in the White House, although the two leaders disagreed on tariffs lifting and the "51st state," according to the live broadcast of CBC News.

Giving a post-meeting news conference in Washington, Carney said that he and Trump agreed to have further conversations in the coming weeks and meet again in person at the G7 summit in Kananaskis, Alberta, Xinhua news agency reported.

Carney said he told Trump it's "not useful" to repeat the 51st state idea, adding that Trump is the president who is going to say whatever he wants. "He understands that we are having a negotiation between sovereign nations," said Carney.

Responding to the question if he is heading back to Ottawa with any tangible

progress on ending the trade war, Carney said they had some very specific things to follow up on and build out from that.

"These are the discussions you have when you're looking to find solutions," he said.

While Trump made it clear that the tariffs, especially those on the auto sector, would stay in place, Carney said, "We'll see."

Canadian workers and suppliers in auto plant towns are worried that the longer the tariff dispute goes on, the less likely those finished cars are to be sold, reported CBC News.

"If he (Trump) actually achieves shutting down production in Canada and Mexico, it doesn't mean he's going to get new production in the US," Flavio Volpe, president of Canada's Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association, was quoted as saying.

Volpe said he hopes Carney will announce further meetings with Trump. "I want to know that we've set a date for the next game."

Columbia shows door to 180 after Trump cuts grants

Agencies
NEW YORK

Columbia University said Tuesday that it will be laying off nearly 180 staffers in response to President Donald Trump's decision to cancel \$400 million in funding over the Manhattan college's handling of student protests against the war in Gaza.

Those receiving non-renewal or termination notices Tuesday represent about 20% of the employees funded in some manner by the terminated federal grants, the university said in a statement Tuesday.

"We have had to make deliberate, considered decisions about the allocation of our financial resources," the



university said. "Those decisions also impact our greatest resource, our people. We understand this news will be

hard." University spokesperson Jessica Murphy declined to say whether more layoffs were expected, but said Columbia is taking a range of steps to create financial flexibility, including maintaining current salary levels and offering voluntary retirement incentives.

Research will also be scaled back, with some departments

winding down studies and others maintaining some level of research.

The layoffs, while expected, were "dispiriting" for faculty, said Marcel Agueros, secretary of Columbia's chapter of the American Association of University Professors, which has filed a federal lawsuit against the Trump administration.

Merz in France, Poland to put up united front in trade war

Agencies
BERLIN

Friedrich Merz made his world-affairs debut Wednesday as Germany's new chancellor, with plans to immediately team up with allies France and Poland to present a united European front on support for Ukraine and against US President Donald Trump's trade war.

The new pairing of Merz and French President Emmanuel Macron - both

firm believers in the European Union - could help stiffen resistance from the 27-nation bloc against pressure from Trump and against Russia's continuing war in Ukraine.

With the EU's largest economies and populations, the tandem of Germany and France has long underpinned the 27-nation bloc but lost some of its vigour in recent months as leaders in both countries wrestled with domestic issues.

Merz and Macron are hoping to give the relationship fresh impetus at a crucial time, with Russian President Vladimir Putin both exerting pressure on the EU, forcing it to rethink its own security.

Merz's trips come the day after his historic defeat in the first round of voting in the German parliament. No other postwar candidate for German chancellor has failed to win on the first ballot. He won in the second round.

Agencies
VATICAN CITY

With all the pomp, drama and solemnity that the Catholic Church can muster, 133 cardinals on Wednesday began centuries-old rituals to elect a successor to Pope Francis, celebrating a morning Mass before opening the most geographically diverse conclave in the faith's 2,000-year history.

The dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, presided over the service, urging the voters to set aside all personal interests

and find a pope who prizes unity. The world today needs a leader who can awaken consciences, he said.

From the altar of St Peter's Basilica, Re prayed that the cardinals can agree "on the pope that our time needs," as he offered a final set of marching orders before they enter the Sistine Chapel later Wednesday to begin the secret voting.

Hailing from 70 countries, the cardinals are being sequestered from the outside world, their cellphones surrendered, and airwaves



around the Vatican jammed to prevent all communications until they find a new leader for the 1.4 billion-member church.

Francis named 108 of the

133 "princes of the church," choosing many pastors in his image from far-flung countries like Mongolia, Sweden and Tonga that had never had a cardinal before.

His decision to surpass the usual limit of 120 cardinal electors and include younger ones from the "global south" - often marginalized countries with lower economic clout - has injected an unusual degree of uncertainty in a process that is always full of mystery and suspense, with smoke signals telling the world if a pope has been elected or not.

Many cardinals hadn't met one another until last week and lamented they needed more time to get to know each other.

Briefs

MUMBAI
GPCC wins under 12 Dream 11 Cup



Ganesh Palkar Cricket Club (GPCC) won the under 12 Dream 11 Cup after defeating Goenka Associate Educational Trust (GAET) by eight wickets at the Vengsarkar Cricket Academy pitch in Oval maiden. GAET team while batting first were bundled out for a meagre 81 runs in 30.2 overs, due to some accurate bowling from Aditya Jare (3/10), Vard Gowari (2/8) and Zaib Shaikh (2/13). In reply, GPCC chased the target in 16.3 overs to reach 82/2.

MUMBAI
Ketan Chawla beats Malkeet Singh



Ketan Chawla sprang a big surprise eliminating Malkeet Singh in a round of 32 match of the ₹32 lakh prize money NSCI Baulkline 4.0 all India snooker tournament at the NSCI Dome on Wednesday. In deficit at 2-3, Chawla produced a classic display to turn the tables on the fancied Malkeet Singh 5-3, winning three frames in a row in the match set to nine frames. **Mohammed Hussain** Khan of Railways also tasted success defeating Gaurav Jaisinghani 5-1 to advance. E. Pandurangiah put it across Anand Mehta and Himanshu Jain beat A. Mudasir.

T20 MUMBAI LEAGUE AUCTION | Musheer Khan, Sairaj Patil, Ayush Mhatre, Raghuvanshi also attract impressive amounts

Ankolekar gets top bid



MCA President Ajinkya Naik (C) along with Secretary Abhay Hadap on Wednesday.

Haridev Pushparaj
MUMBAI

Atharva Ankolekar emerged as the top buy for Eagle Thane Strikers in the T20 Mumbai League 2025 Auction.

The 24-year-old was bought by the Thane Strikers for Rs 16.25 lakh.

The young stars of Mumbai cricket were ruling the roost with Musheer Khan going for Rs 15 lakh to ARCS Andheri while Sairaj Patil was snapped up by Eagle Thane Strikers for the same amount.

The brightest young star on the Mumbai cricketing horizon Ayush Mhatre who has been making waves in the Indian Premier League (IPL) went for Rs 14.75 lakh to Triumph Nights Mumbai North East. The 17-year-old has been in cracking form in with a best score of 94 in the

season so far.

Angkrish Raghuvanshi and Shams Mulani were picked up by Sobo Mumbai Falcons and Aakash Tigers Mumbai Western Suburbs for Rs 14 lakh each.

Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) President Ajinkya Naik was elated with the proceedings of the day and felt the star power for the league was a big advantage. ‘Suryakumar Yadav was present today and even Sarfaraz Khan was there, all India players are playing in the league and all IPL players selected till now are available. Overall the auction has gone well till now.’

The MCA President also added that the presence of senior India players like Suryakumar Yadav at the auction will act as a boost to young players aspiring to

shine in the league.

‘It will definitely make the youngsters happy having some of our senior players like Surya at the auction.’

Referring to the pricing of the players and their abilities, Naik felt it was ultimately upto the young players selected to perform.

‘Cost is secondary, performance is primary. The players have to make it count,’ he added.

India T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav, who was present at the auction, was happy with the franchises picking young stars Ayush Mhatre and Angkrish Raghuvanshi.

‘Both are promising cricketers, crazy talents and good boys.

‘It’s great to see young boys doing well in franchise cricket and dominating,’ he added.

Top buys

Atharva Ankolekar
Eagle Thane Strikers
₹16.25 lakh

Musheer Khan, ARCS
Andheri
₹15 lakh

Sairaj Patil Eagle
Thane Strikers
₹15 lakh

Ayush Mhatre,
Triumph Nights
Mumbai North East
₹14.75 lakh

Angkrish Raghuvanshi
Sobo Mumbai Falcons
₹14 lakh

Shams Mulani, Aakash
Tigers Mumbai
Western Suburbs
₹14 lakh



Champions League

Inter Milan beat Barcelona in extra time to enter final

AP
MILAN

Inter Milan has another Champions League final to look forward to. Once the players catch their breath, that is. In the end it took extra time, two astonishing comebacks and 13 goals to separate Barcelona and Inter and see the Italian club - which was a mere seconds away from elimination - prevail 7-6 on aggregate after winning another roller-coaster encounter 4-3 on

Tuesday.

Substitute Davide Frattesi was the extra-time star for Inter, firing home in the 99th minute to leave the Barcelona players slumped to the ground while his Nerazzurri teammates - including those on the bench - were racing to celebrate with him.

“I don’t know what happened tonight. I’m lucky I managed to finish the game, I screamed so much (in celebration) that I saw everything black,” Frattesi told

Scoreline

At SanSiro: Inter Milan 4 Barcelona 3
Aggregate: Inter Milan 7 Barcelona 6

Italian broadcaster Sky.

Moments earlier, he’d been encouraging the already loud San Siro crowd to make more noise and the atmosphere grew more feverish after Frattesi delivered on his super-sub reputation again.

“That’s part of my career,” the midfielder said.

“I wasn’t given so much

incredible talent, but I am always the last one to give up and the first one to believe we can do it. At 3-3, I told Marcus (Thuram) that we would go through.”

Three-time European champion Inter, which lost the 2023 final to Manchester City, will face either Paris Saint-Germain or Arsenal in

Munich on May 31 for the title. PSG beat Arsenal 1-0 in London last week in their first match. The return leg is Wednesday in Paris.

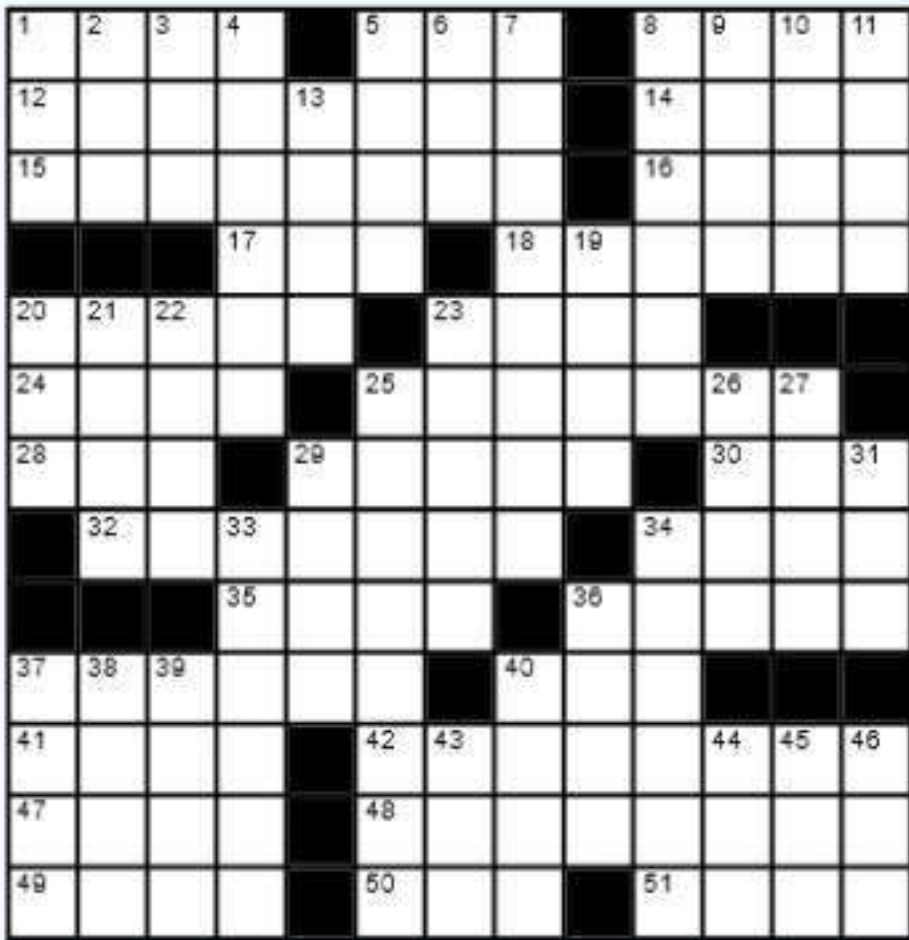
Inter coach Simone Inzaghi thinks his squad has shown in wins over Barcelona in the semis and Bayern Munich in the quarter-finals that it can compete against the very best.

“My players have been extraordinary, they’ve put out there two monstrous performances to get to this final,” he said.



Inter Milan’s Davide Frattesi (L) celebrates after scoring his team’s winning goal against Barcelona. AFP

Crossword #1495



- Across**
- Hairless
 - Sigh of contentment
 - In Greek mythology she was cup-bearer to the gods
 - Way before time (3,5)
 - Consumer
 - Improved or bettered
 - Hacienda room - "alas" anagram ?
 - Might
 - Outcome
 - Important
 - Des Moines is the capital of this U.S. state
 - It's full form? (2,2)
 - Vexed or enraged
 - Calendar abbr.
 - Rummier
 - Japanese copper coin
 - Yehudi ____ : the famous violinist?
 - South America's "ostrich"
 - Between two ports
 - Long for
 - Ledger entries
 - Clothing edge
 - Gone sans permission
 - Start
 - Tennis legend Lacoste
 - Disappears
 - ____ state of affairs: unfortunate circumstances (1,3)
 - Ambulance person: abbr.
 - Nav. readings

- Down**
- British Thermal Unit, in short
 - Assoc. of Optical Practitioners
 - Laughing out loud, acronym?
 - Smaller moon of Mars
 - Showily pretentious
 - Alcoholic beverage
 - Lightest gas
 - Cavalry soldier
 - Jacob's twin brother
 - As sound as a ____ ?
 - Quod ____ demonstrandum
 - A long way off
 - Large water jug
 - Minimum, abbr.
 - Very small particle
 - Swing music
 - Asian country
 - A glue
 - Bollywood's ____ Deol
 - Horned animal
 - Expel
 - Bobbsey twin
 - Secured with brad
 - Negligent or careless
 - Himalayan myth
 - Indian wrestling great ____ Singh
 - Female sheep
 - ____ fide : real and genuine ?
 - Innuendo or insinuation
 - Vietnam, colloquially and in short ?
 - American Helicopter Society
 - 4520th letter of the alphabet
 - The letter "S"

YOUR DAY By Vinayak Vishwas Karandikar



ARIES: Today is the day to study, enjoy family life, do business or travel. Expect expenditure on entertainment, businesses, education, vehicles or spouses. People in event management, the automobile industry, entertainment, art, and the travel industry will get success. A family function or travel with family is indicated. Some people may suffer from skin troubles, kidney problems or diabetes. Lucky no.: 3; Lucky colour: Yellow



TAURUS: You may travel today. Take care of your health. Expect expenditure on medical bills, travel or communication. People in art, advertising, entertainment, medicine, and banking will benefit. A dispute with your younger sibling or spouse is indicated. Some people may suffer from skin diseases, kidney issues or eye problems. Lucky no.: 8; Lucky colours: Black, Blue



GEMINI: Today is the day to enjoy, travel and spend. Expect expenditure on luxury items, vehicles, children or travel. People in art, entertainment, sports, and tourism will benefit. A picnic or a long journey with family is indicated. Some people may suffer from sexual problems or eye troubles. Lucky no.: 9



CANCER: It is a day to be with family. You might spend the time studying or enjoying the day. Expect expenditure on houses, vehicles or education. People in the automobile industry, art, entertainment, and education will benefit. You will enjoy decorating or renovating your house. Some people may suffer from diabetes or eye problems. Lucky no.: 6; Lucky colour: Pink



LEO: Today is the day to travel, spend and enjoy. Expect expenditure related to businesses, travel, communication or premium services. People in tourism, advertising, entertainment, art, and maintenance will benefit. A long journey or a picnic is indicated. Some people may suffer from knee pain or shoulder pain. Lucky no.: 2; Lucky colours: silver, white



VIRGO: Today is the day to earn, travel and study. Expect expenditure on education, travel or entertainment. People in entertainment, art, and tourism will benefit. A happy time with family members is indicated. Some people may suffer from eye problems, throat pain or skin diseases. Lucky no.: 5; Lucky colour: Green



LIBRA: Today physical and mental stress and loss are indicated for you, so take care. Expect expenditure on businesses, health, premium services or vehicles. People associated with entertainment, art, pubs, boarding and lodging, and the automobile industry will benefit. Illness of a family member is indicated. You may suffer from skin diseases, kidney issues, hernias



SCORPIO: Today is the day for expenditure, travel, business and enjoyment. Expect expenditure on luxury items, beauty products, entertainment or travel. People in art, entertainment, tourism, and the beauty industry will benefit. A long journey, picnic or tour with family is indicated. You may suffer from kidney problems, hernias or eye problems. Lucky no.: 3; Lucky colours: Yellow, Saffron



SAGITTARIUS: Today you may get your stuck money back. Expect expenditure on health, houses, vehicles or premium services. People in the automobile industry, entertainment, art, and the medical field will get success. Disputes with family members are indicated. Some people may suffer from stomach pain, kidney issues or sexual problems. Lucky no.: 1; Lucky colour: Orange



CAPRICORN: Today is the day for enjoyment, business, travel and communication. Expect expenditure on businesses, children or entertainment. People in art, entertainment, sports, advertisement, and event management will get success. Your married and love lives will be romantic. It is time to see movies and plays and attend parties. Lucky no.: 6; Lucky colour: Pink

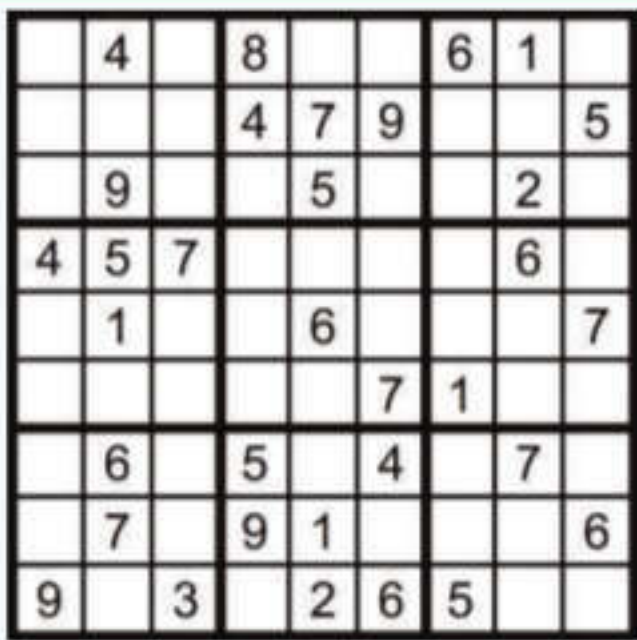


AQUARIUS: Today is the day to study and travel. Expect expenditure related to education, interior decoration, vehicles or travel. People in art, education, interior decoration, architecture, and the automobile industry will benefit. A get-together or a party is expected in your house. Some people may suffer from indigestion or chest pains. Lucky no.: 7; Lucky colour: Grey



PISCES: Today loss is indicated, so act wisely. Expect expenditure on children, premium services, maintenance or health. People working in liquor shops, bars, and pubs, or those associated with fields like art, entertainment, and insurance will benefit. A family dispute is indicated, so try to avoid it. Some people may suffer from back pain, shoulder pain or kidney problems.

FPJ - SUDOKU - 386



Solution

WHAT TO DO: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Every puzzle has only one correct solution.

Changing Mindsets, Healing The Planet

—Rajyogi Brahma Kumar Nikunj Ji

Recently, news channels and newspapers carried the news of a 2-metre-tall statue of Nataraja being installed on the premises of one of the world's premier scientific institutes, CERN. Some say that the Nataraja statue explains the structure of the atom, and therefore scientists decided to place it in the CERN campus. Whereas some are saying that the posture of the statue called 'Anand Tandavam' is similar to the motion of sub-atoms. The most surprising answer came from a scientist who expressed that Lord Shankar's form of Nataraja symbolises the cosmic dance of creation and destruction.

It was not so long back when activists had predicted that sooner or later nature will definitely react to all the abuses she has been sustaining from human beings. For thousands of years nature has provided humanity with free clean water, food, fresh air, fertile earth, and every variety of benefit for our sustenance and enjoyment, and it has given us untold wealth. But instead of respecting the laws of nature and using its abundance wisely, we have indulged in an orgy of greed and egoistic destructiveness. A recent

scientific study into climate change has concluded that almost all of the summer sea ice in the Arctic Ocean is likely to disappear by late this century because of global warming. Such an eventuality is inevitable because of the unstoppable momentum of global warming, which is being caused by the emission of greenhouse gases which trap heat in the atmosphere, raising the average temperature. The reason for all this is human karma against nature, and now is the time to reap the bitter fruits of those selfish and arrogant attitudes and activities. Now that we are truly in an emergency situation, what is to be done?

To start with, we need to CHANGE. Yes! It's high time that we now become responsible in our relationship with nature and with each other. Unless we check and change the basis of our growth process and attune our lifestyle to respect the laws of nature, we can be sure that nature will continue to strike more ferociously.

(Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist for publications across India, Nepal & UK. Till Date, 8500+ Published Columns have been written by Him)

(nikunjji@gmail.com/www.brahmakumaris.com)

SAIBABA & SWAMI SAMARTH
MESSAGE FOR THE DAY

Today is extremely important; make the most of it. It is a day for learning, luxury, and contemplation.

You will receive answers from us if you sit silently and meditate.

Heal your doubts and anxiety, and surrender your worries for magic to happen. We loved the sandalwood offering.

Tip for the day: Offer rose water and say, "Baba and Swami, let the fragrance of joy fill our lives." The next day, sprinkle it on yourself, your family, and your home.

Lots of divine miracles your way, Sheetal Sapan Mhatre.

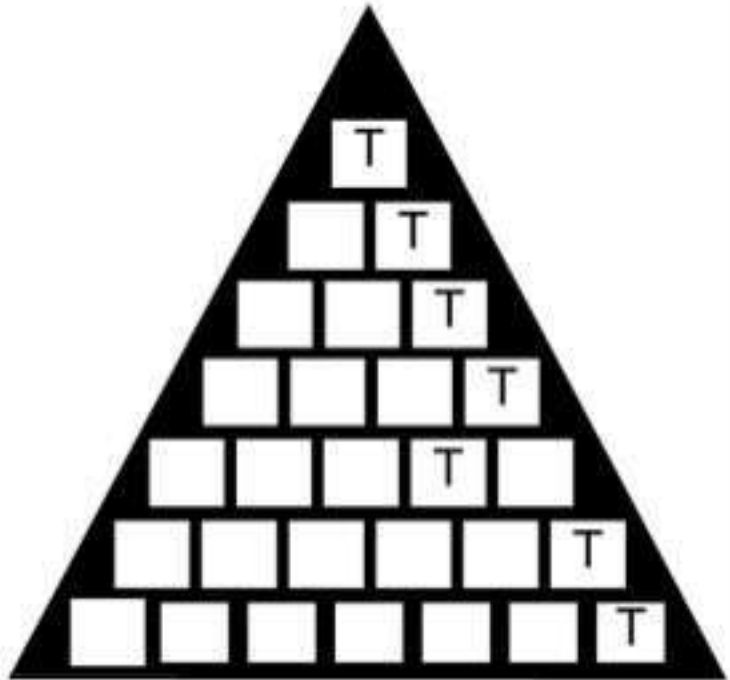




ALPHA TRIANGLE

Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

- 1 Tonne, abbr.
- 2 Astatine for the chemist
- 3 Chow down
- 4 Orient
- 5 Flavour
- 6 Certify
- 7 Most corpulent



T, At, Eat, East, Taste, Attest, Fattest.

Solution to Alpha Triangle

S G E R H S E C E I P W S
E C R E E V E T S T E B P
L E U L A V A L K Y L I I
E J T A R R Z Y U K O W H
C S N E T P L E G R H T C
T N U D S N R I C B A S S
I G M S E J F O U E N W N
O I B V R T D L S E D G E
N S E E S A C G K K L A K
T E R D N K H O L D E M O
S D S T Y L E S P A I D T
E I E T L D I A M O N D S
B C A R D S C A S I N O S

Poker

Can you find the words connected in one way or the other with the theme indicated by the title in today's Word Search? The words may be read horizontally, vertically or diagonally either forwards or backwards, but always in straight lines. Use a ruler to cross them through as you find them.

- Ante

Best

Bets

Cards

Case

Casinos

Chips

Club

Dealer
- Designs

Diamonds

Edge

Evenly

Gifts

Handle

Hearts

Holdem

Numbers
- Paid

Pieces

Pros

Rate

Rules

Selection

Styles

Tokens

Value



Go Figure



Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once. Operations should be carried out sequentially. BODMAS rule does not apply.

The operators:



Easy

= 21

3 4 4 7

Medium

= 29

2 3 6 7

Hard

= 20

2 3 5 8

Our Solutions:
Easy - 7 x 4 / 4 x 3 = 21
Medium - 3 x 2 x 6 - 7 = 29
Hard - 5 - 3 + 8 x 2 = 20

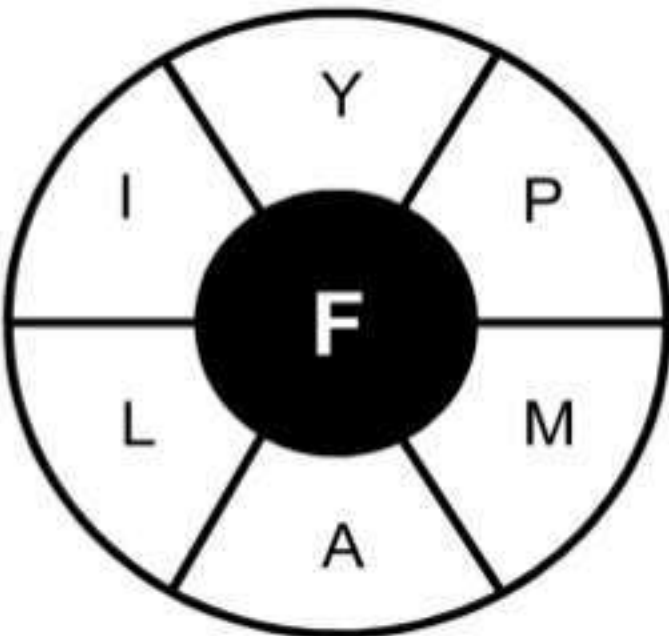
Riddler

This is a test to gauge your mental flexibility, creativity and cunning. Good Luck!
(Example: 16 O in a P. Answer: 16 Ounces in a Pound)
13 L in a B D

Answer: 13 Leaves in a baker's dozen

BULL'S EYE

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Each word can use a letter only once and must contain the central letter. There should be at least one 7-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as reference.

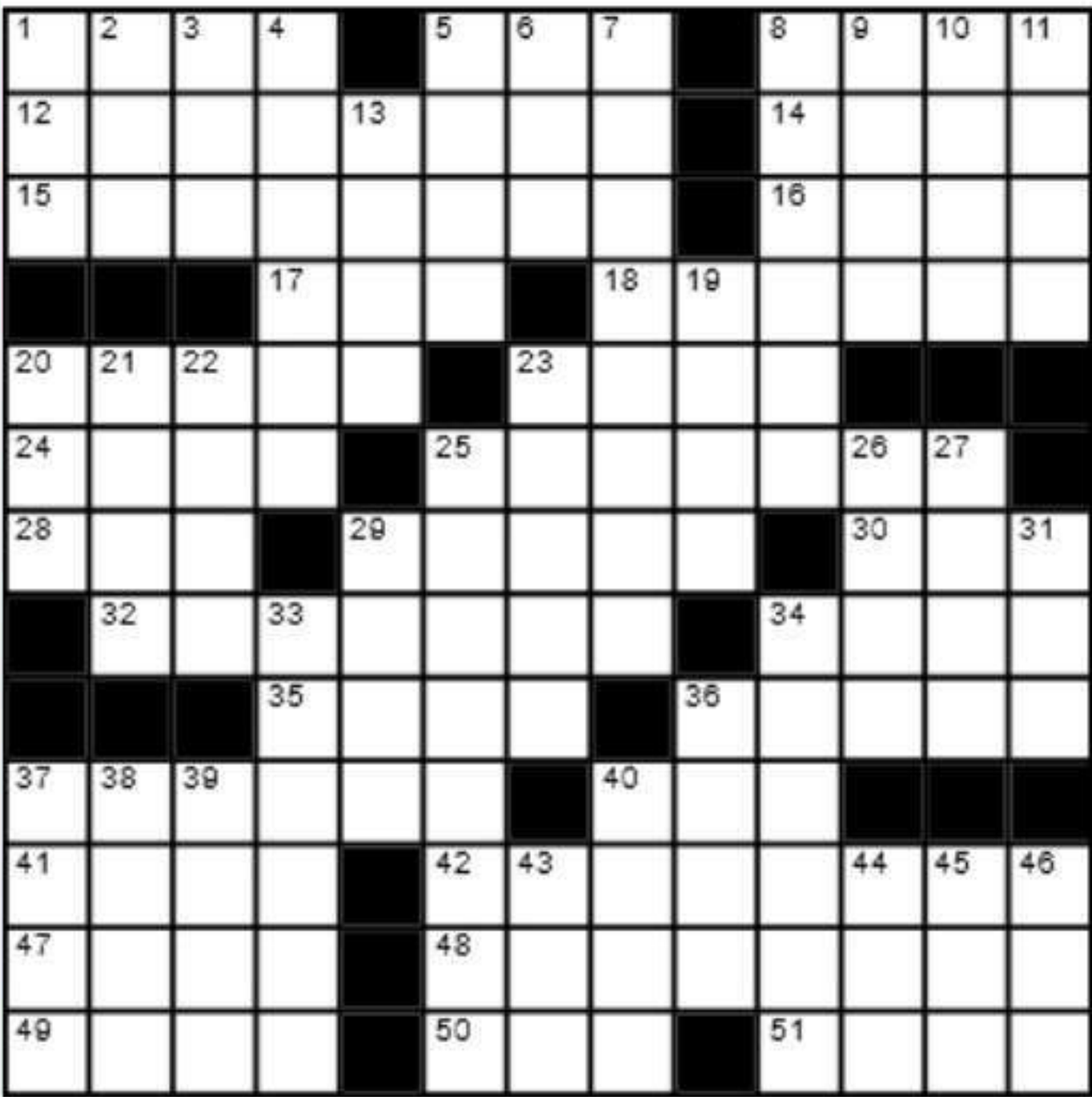


Ratings:

05 average; 06 good; 08 outstanding.

SOLUTION :
AMPLIFY, fail, family, film, filmy, flap, flay, flip

Crossword #1495



Across

- 1 Hairless
- 5 Sigh of contentment
- 8 In Greek mythology she was cup-bearer to the gods
- 12Way before time (3,5)
- 14Consumer
- 15Improved or bettered
- 16Hacienda room - "alas" anagram ?
- 17Might
- 18Outcome
- 20Important
- 23Des Moines is the capital of this U.S. state
- 24It's full form? (2,2)
- 25Vexed or enraged
- 28Calendar abbr.

Down

- 30A Japanese copper coin
- 32Yehudi ____ : the famous violinist?
- 34South America's "ostrich"
- 35Between two ports
- 36Long for
- 37Ledger entries
- 40Clothing edge
- 41Gone sans permission
- 42Start
- 47Tennis legend
- Lacoste
- 48Disappears
- 49 ____ state of affairs: unfortunate circumstances (1,3)
- 50Ambulance person: abbr.
- 51Nav. readings

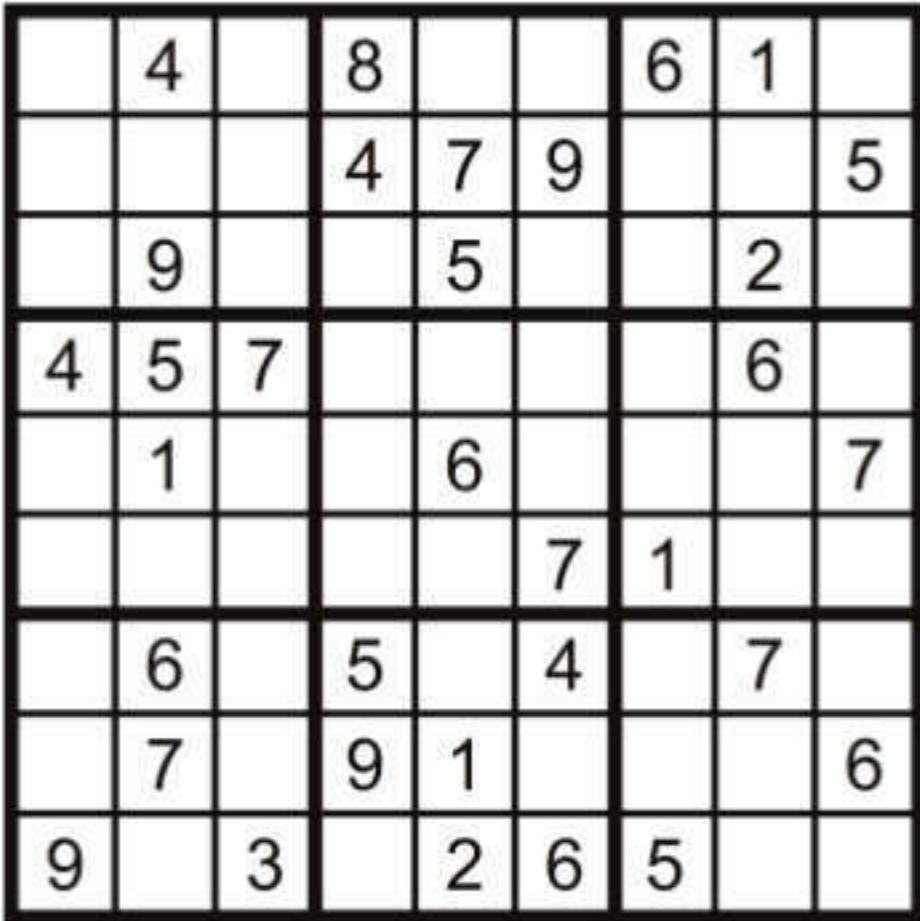
Down

- 1 British Thermal Unit, in short
- 2 Assoc. of Optical Practitioners
- 3 Laughing out loud, acronym?
- 4 Smaller moon of Mars
- 5 Showily pretentious
- 6 Alcoholic beverage
- 7 Lightest gas
- 8 Cavalry soldier
- 9 Jacob's twin brother
- 10As sound as a ____ ?
- 11Quod ____ demonstrandum
- 13A long way off
- 19Large water jug
- 20Minimum, abbr.
- 21Very small particle
- 22Swing music
- 23Asian country

25A glue

- 26Bollywood's ____ Deol
- 27Horned animal
- 29Expel
- 31A Bobsey twin
- 33Secured with brad
- 34Negligent or careless
- 36Himalayan myth
- 37Indian wrestling great ____ Singh
- 38Female sheep
- 39 ____ fide : real and genuine ?
- 40Innuendo or insinuation
- 43Vietnam, colloquially and in short ?
- 44American Helicopter Society
- 4520th letter of the alphabet
- 46The letter "S"

SUDOKU



43 Nam, 44 AHS, 45 Tee, 46 Ess.
37 Dan, 38 Ewes, 39 Bona, 40 Hint,
31 Nam, 33 Nailed, 34 Remiss, 36 Yet,
25 Adhesive, 26 Esna, 27 Deer, 29 Oust,
20 Min, 21 Atom, 22 Jive, 23 India,
9 Esau, 10 Bell, 11 Eat, 13 Alar, 19 Ewer,
5 Any, 6 Ale, 7 Hydrogen, 8 Hussar,
Down: 1 BTU, 2 AOR, 3 Lol, 4 Demos,
sad, 50 EMT, 51 SSES.
42 Initiate, 47 Rene, 48 Vanishes, 49 A
36 Yeam, 37 Debits, 40 Hem, 41 Awol,
30 Sen, 32 Menuhin, 34 Rhea, 35 Asea,
24 It is, 25 Angered, 28 Nov, 29 Odder,
17 May, 18 Result, 20 Major, 23 Iowa,
early, 14 User, 15 Uplifted, 16 Sala,
Across: 1 Bald, 5 Ash, 8 Hebe, 12 Too



WHAT TO DO: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Every puzzle has only one correct solution.

Essential Gardening Tools: The must-have watering can

Savitha B

A skilled gardener maximizes the efficiency of every available resource. In this vibrant realm of horticulture, where plants thrive and unfold their beauty, a pivotal instrument commands attention—the watering can. Beyond its utilitarian purpose, a watering can is a gardener's trusted companion, a vessel of nurturing care that ensures plants receive the attention they need. In this article, we will explore the different types of watering cans and delve into their varied uses, highlighting why these simple yet essential tools are a must-have for every gardener.



careful attention, and a watering can with a rose attachment or a fine spout is perfect for providing a gentle shower of water. This prevents seedlings from being disturbed or damaged during the critical early stages of growth.

- **Disease prevention:** Watering cans contribute to plant health by minimizing water contact with foliage. Splashing water onto leaves can spread diseases, and the precise application of a watering can helps keep plants healthier and more resistant to pests and pathogens.



Types of watering cans:

Traditional watering can:

Recognizable by its classic design, featuring a long spout and a curved handle, the traditional watering can is a timeless favorite among gardeners. Its simplicity and functionality make it suitable for a wide range of plants, from delicate flowers to hearty vegetables.

Rose watering can:

With a rose attachment at the end of the spout, this type of watering can ensures a gentle and even distribution of water. Ideal for nurturing young seedlings and plants with sensitive foliage, the rose watering can prevents soil erosion and minimizes the risk of overwatering.

Haws watering can:

Characterized by its elegant and ergonomic design, the Haws watering can is a favorite among avid gardeners. Its sleek shape, balance, and long spout make it easy to reach plants in tight spaces or hanging baskets. Haws cans are often made of high-quality materials, ensuring durability and longevity.

Self-watering can:

Modern gardening has introduced self-watering cans with built-in reservoirs or mechanisms that allow for automatic watering. These innovative cans are particularly convenient for those with busy schedules or for plants that require consistent moisture levels.

Uses of watering cans:

Seedling care:

Delicate seedlings require careful attention, and a watering can with a rose attachment or a fine spout is perfect for providing a gentle shower of water. This prevents seedlings from being disturbed or damaged during the critical early stages of growth.

- **Targeted watering:** Watering cans allow gardeners to target specific areas or plants that require extra care. This is especially crucial in areas with diverse plant types or varying water needs.

- **Precision watering:** Watering cans offer a level of precision that hoses and sprinklers cannot match. Gardeners can direct water precisely to the base of plants, minimizing water wastage and ensuring that the roots receive adequate hydration.

So, the next time you embark on your gardening adventure, don't forget to grab your watering can—it's the magical wand that brings life and vitality to your green oasis.

Amritha K

Colouring your hair is the new 'it' thing; social media is proof! The introduction of home-grown, vegan and cruelty-free brands seems responsible for the increasing number of people colouring the tresses in pretty, funky colours. For natural Indian hair, which varies from jet black to a deep brown, bleaching is the first step in hair colouring. The dark shade of our hair has to be lightened if you want the preppy colours to be visible. When bleach is applied to hair, it oxidises the melanin granules that make it look black. Because this causes hair damage, your hair needs to be in good condition before you bleach it. If your hair is dry or damaged, wait a month or two before you bleach it. While you're waiting, you can revive your hair. At least two weeks before you bleach your hair, start preparing it - that is, by applying oil regularly, pausing hair styling and straightening and regularly conditioning.

We've all heard it and still hear it - 'don't bleach your hair, it ruins it,' but well-behaved women (and men) seldom have fun (or something like that), right?! So, while there will be certain damage to your hair, proper hair care after bleaching and colouring can go a long way. Here are certain points you need to keep in mind before bleaching your hair. Take a look.

Things to keep in mind before bleaching hair

- **Know your hair type:** Is your hair suited for bleach? Bleaching dries the hair and causes damage, so if your hair is dry and prone to damage, you may want to improve your hair health before bleaching hair.

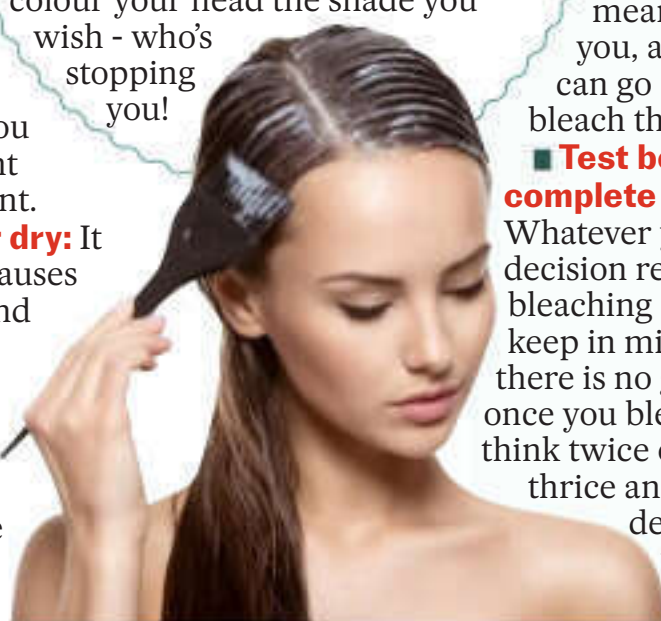
- **Research different brands:** Spend time and search for the types of bleaching agents available and what your hair specialist is likely to use. Also, decide whether you want to go for a store-bought bleach or a natural ingredient.

- **Bleach makes the hair dry:** It is no secret that bleaching causes the hair strands to go dry, and hair strands are damaged. Are you ready to let your hair go through that damage? Consult a professional as to what steps to take to minimise damage.

- **Choose a colour to suit your skin tone:** Not all skin tones will suit all shades of hair tones. If you cannot make up your mind, try doing a colour test with computer images. Seeing yourself in different hair tones can help you decide better. Another thing that you can do is visit a wig store and try different coloured wigs. Ooor, you can just go crazy and colour your head the shade you wish - who's stopping you!

- **No going back:** Before you bleach all the hair, do a test run. Try bleaching a portion of your hair, some area which is not much visible. If your hair and scalp are in good condition after the bleach, that means it suits you, and you can go ahead and bleach throughout.

- **Test before a complete change:** Whatever your decision regarding bleaching hair, always keep in mind that there is no going back once you bleach. So, think twice or even thrice and take a decision with all confidence.



- **Your hair will require extra care:** Normal hair requires care for health and bounce, and for bleaching hair white, you need to be careful to cover all the strands. You need to be careful about washing bleached hair and check the changing colour as time passes. Use dry shampoo as far as possible. Try to keep hair tangle-free. Use products made for bleached hair.
- **Check scalp health:** Your scalp needs to be in good health before a hair bleaching session. If you have any infection, are undergoing chemotherapy or radiation, have lice or scratchy scalp, try to get that healed first. Bleaching can worsen these conditions.

Bleaching your hair? Know this first

Step-by-step guide to bleach your hair

Now that you have an idea of whether bleaching is suitable for your hair, here is a step-by-step on how you can do it at home.

- **Step 1:** Get all your supplies ready - bleach powder, developer, plastic bowl, brush and gloves.
- **Step 2:** Wear some old clothes.
- **Step 3:** Section your hair.
- **Step 4:** Mix the developer and bleach (as per instructions).
- **Step 5:** Apply the bleach and cover your hair with aluminium foil or a plastic bag.

- **Step 6:** Apply the colour first to the tips and mid-lengths of your hair as they take longer to lighten than roots.
- **Step 7:** Let the bleach sit for at least 20 minutes before you apply the colour to the roots.
- **Step 8:** Do not leave the bleach on for more than 30-45 minutes.
- **Step 9:** After 45 minutes, rinse the bleach out thoroughly using a mild shampoo to balance the pH levels of your scalp.
- **Step 10:** Air-dry your hair, and now you are free to colour your tresses!



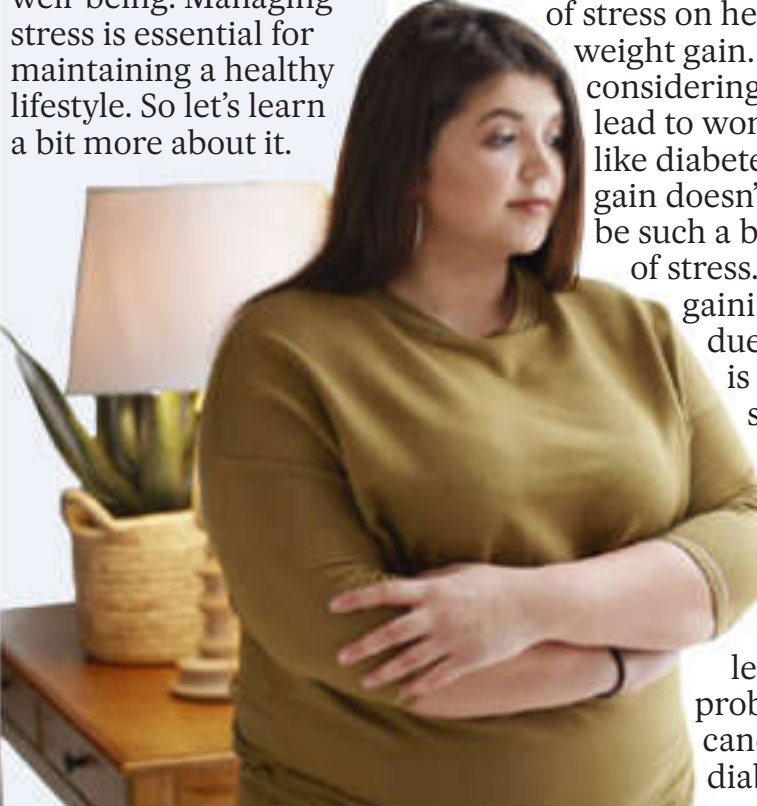
Warning: If you notice redness, itching, or burning after you have kept the bleach on your hair for a while, please wash the bleach off and consult a doctor.

Note: If you are having second thoughts about bleaching your hair at home, go to a salon and get it done by a professional.

Stress is linked with weight gain, scientists reveal

Sakhi Pandey

Stress is a very common term thrown around casually whenever one is feeling pressurized or burdened because of various factors known as stressors like overloading work, functions, exams, etc. It can manifest not only in the form of emotional strain but also as physical symptoms, affecting overall well-being. Managing stress is essential for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. So let's learn a bit more about it.



However, what exactly is stress?

Stress is nothing but a physical, bodily response to stressors around us. When under a lot of pressure or feeling stressed, our body thinks that we are going under attack and therefore secretes a lot of hormones to deal with the stress or to fight back. If this mental state is prolonged, it could lead to some awful effects on health and in some cases - death, as explained by Hans Selye's GAS Model of Stress.

One of the adverse effects of stress on health is weight gain. Although, considering stress can lead to worse diseases like diabetes, weight gain doesn't seem to be such a bad effect of stress. However, gaining weight due to stress is not something one should take lightly. Weight gain itself can lead to heart problems, cancer, diabetes,

strokes and even depression at times. Stress is one of the main reasons weight is gained by a lot of people around the world, as proven by science and scientists working on the adverse effects of stress. When one is under a lot of stress, they might start losing appetite as a result, however, when you start experiencing chronic stress, i.e., when stressors are present in the environment over a long period of time, generally for over a few months, a person is said to be experiencing chronic stress. With chronic stress comes overeating, as stress actually makes one more hungry than usual due to all the hormonal imbalances in the body.

In chronic stress, the body enters survival mode, triggering excessive hunger and overeating as it falsely perceives calorie depletion from stress-induced efforts, despite not having actually burned those calories. This creates a compelling urge to compensate for the perceived calorie loss during the stress response.

So then why go in for "Comfort foods" and not something healthy?

While going through a stressful episode, our body secretes a hormone known as cortisol, also known as "the stress hormone." Secretion of this hormone into the body increases the level of insulin in the body. An increase in insulin leads to a decrease in the blood sugar level. Therefore, this fall in blood sugar level makes one crave for food that is sugary and sweet as well as fatty foods in general. That is why we choose having an ice cream or cake over a full course healthy meal or a bowl of vegetables or salad. It's not just because it tastes better but also because your body practically demands it. That's why sugary, fatty foods are called comfort foods—stress makes us crave them, leading to weight gain, especially belly fat.

Why is it important to keep our weight in check?

Although the weight gain is caused due to stress, the factors inculcate overeating and eating junk food, which is how we gain weight generally and therefore it is extremely unhealthy.

- **First** things first, weight gain affects more than how our body looks on the outside. It is responsible for causing a number of health issues like heart problems and diabetes and thus obesity needs to be kept in check and one of the ways to do that is to take less stress or avoid overeating and exercising more often and eating foods like fruits, etc.

- **Second**, it battles with the shape of your body. A lot of people feel more confident when they look their best and weight gain as well as loss due to stress disrupts that state of being and therefore becomes a problem.

Understanding the risk factors and importance of early detection in ovarian cancer

MUMBAI

Ovarian cancer remains one of the most challenging gynecological cancers due to its subtle symptoms and late detection. This article sheds light on the risk factors of ovarian cancer. Furthermore, know why timely detection can be life-saving for women.

Ovarian cancer is a type of cancer that starts in the ovaries and often goes undetected until it has spread. In advanced stages, symptoms may include abdominal bloating, pelvic pain, frequent urination, and changes in bowel habits. Risk factors include age, family history, and genetic mutations like BRCA1/2. Awareness and early check-ups are key to improving outcomes and saving lives.

"One of the strongest known risk factors for ovarian cancer is genetics. Women who carry inherited mutations in the BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes are at a much higher risk of developing ovarian cancer. These genetic

mutations can be passed down from either parent, and women with a family history of breast or ovarian cancer should consider genetic counseling. Besides BRCA mutations, Lynch syndrome, a condition linked to colon and endometrial cancers, also increases the risk. Age is another significant factor. Most ovarian cancers are diagnosed in women over 50, with risk increasing as women grow older. However, it's important to note that younger women are not immune, especially if other risk factors are present. A family history of ovarian, breast, or Survival rate for ovarian cancer significantly improves with early diagnosis. If caught in the early stages (Stage I), a woman will be able to improve her quality of life. Unfortunately, due to vague symptoms like bloating, pelvic pain, or changes in bowel habits, many cases are diagnosed at a later stage. Remember, timely intervention is key to detect and manage this cancer," said Dr Kekin Gala, Gynecologist Apollo Spectra, Mumbai.

Explaining about the screening for this cancer, Dr Deep Vora, Oncologist, Zynova Shalby Hospital Mumbai said, "There is currently no effective standard screening test for ovarian cancer, which makes awareness all the more crucial. However, regular pelvic exams, ultrasound imaging in high-risk cases, and being vigilant about symptoms can help detect it earlier.



Women with a strong family history or known genetic risk should undergo regular check-ups and discuss preventative options with their doctors. While Pap smears do not detect ovarian cancer, regular gynecological visits help identify changes that might signal a problem. For those at high risk, transvaginal ultrasounds and CA-125 blood tests may be recommended. Lifestyle choices also matter: Maintaining a healthy weight, avoiding smoking, and staying physically active can help lower the risk. Being informed about one's family history and understanding symptoms will help women to seek timely treatment. So, early awareness, genetic screening, and informed choices can make a life-saving difference for women."

Childhood under pressure: The silent crisis in children's mental health

Dr Maitri Thakker

Clinical Psychologist, Lilavati Hospital Mumbai

Children are not small adults. Their minds are still forming, still fragile. And yet, the pressures we place on them today could break even the strongest among us. Mental Health Awareness Month serves as a critical reminder that mental wellness begins early. In recent years, clinicians, educators, and parents alike have witnessed a worrying trend: childhood is no longer the sanctuary it once was. Across age groups, children are reporting heightened levels of stress, anxiety, sadness, and isolation. It's time we pause and ask are we doing enough to protect their mental health?

The changing face of childhood

In a world that increasingly celebrates achievement, independence and digital connectivity, one group is quietly shouldering a burden it was never meant to bear our children. The idyllic idea of a carefree childhood is being replaced by a reality of relentless academic pressure, screen-induced overstimulation, social comparison, and emotional isolation. As adults look ahead, children today are being pushed to grow up faster than ever before often at the cost of their mental well-being.

The invisible weight of expectations

Children rarely say, "I'm anxious" or "I feel low" Instead, they show us. A once-active child becoming withdrawn. A playful child suddenly erupts in anger. Physical symptoms like frequent headaches or stomach pain, trouble sleeping, or changes in appetite may mask deeper emotional struggles. Yet, in our rush to correct behavior, we often overlook its roots. Labeling a child as "difficult," "lazy," or "overdramatic" risks missing the distress signals they're sending out in the only way they know how.

From school assessments to co-curricular achievements, the bar for "success" keeps rising. Children as young as five are expected to display focus, discipline, and self-regulation, even as their brains are still developing the capacity to manage complex emotions. Adolescents are bombarded with unrealistic standards from academic excellence to body image through social media and peer culture. For many, childhood has become less about play and more about performance.

What does stress look like in a child?

Unlike adults, children rarely express their distress in words. They show it in behavior, sleep patterns, appetite changes, somatic complaints, or emotional outbursts. What might seem like "acting out" or "withdrawing" may be a child's only way to say: "I'm not okay."

Common stress triggers in children: Academic pressure:

High expectations, fear of failure, comparison with peers, and the looming pressure of exams can overwhelm young minds. Even well-meaning encouragement can become burdensome if children internalize it as performance-based worth. Every child has their own pace and personality; comparing them to peers and affirming achievement over effort can lead to emotional upheaval and distress.



Family changes & conflict:

Events like divorce, the loss of a loved one, or even a house move can disrupt a child's sense of safety. Constant arguments or financial tension at home can lead to anxiety, confusion, or emotional shutdown.

Overscheduling: Many children today have little time for rest or unstructured play. Between school, classes, and extra curricular, they are often exhausted, emotionally depleted, and struggling silently.

The neuroscience of childhood stress

The science is unequivocal: chronic stress in childhood alters the architecture of the developing brain. It affects areas responsible for emotional regulation, attention, and memory. Over time, this can result in anxiety disorders, depression, learning difficulties, and behavioral issues.

But just as early stress can harm, the good news is that early support can heal. The developing brain is remarkably plastic—it can reorganize and recover, especially when nurtured in safe, validating environments.

What caregivers must remember

We must replace the expectation of premature maturity with an understanding of developmental needs. Every tantrum, shutdown, or anxious refusal to attend school may be a cry for help—not a failure of discipline. Here's how we can support children more effectively:

- **Listen to create emotional safety with presence, not pressure:** When a child shares something difficult, resist the urge to fix or lecture. Sometimes, being heard is enough. Encourage open conversations about feelings.
- **Model emotional hygiene:** Let children see you express emotions in healthy ways. Show them that sadness or feeling overwhelmed is part of being human. Demonstrate how you manage stress and respond to vulnerability calmly.
- **Limit screen time, increase green time:** Play is essential—movement, nature, and unstructured time build resilience, creativity, and connection. Encourage reading, music, and hands-on activities that ground and soothe.
- **Watch, don't dismiss:** Notice even subtle changes in behavior.
- **Be curious, not critical:** Seek to understand the reason behind a child's behavior rather than rushing to correct it.

A collective responsibility:

Children are shaped by the adults, environments, and systems around them. Instead of asking, "What's wrong with this child?" to "What happened to this child, and how can we help?" This Mental Health Awareness Month, let's stop romanticizing resilience and start creating environments where children don't need it just to survive.

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Allu Arjun and Aamir Khan's recent meeting in Mumbai sparks speculation about a potential collaboration for upcoming projects

Arjun-Aamir collaboration?

CJ Desk

Allu Arjun was in Mumbai a few days ago to attend WAVES 2025. A picture of him with Aamir Khan has gone viral on social media, and netizens are wondering whether the Bollywood star and the Icon star are all set to collaborate for a project. A netizen tweeted, "Guest

appearance in #AA22??" Another netizen thought that maybe Allu Arjun met Aamir for the latter's project *Mahabharat*, he tweeted, "*Mahabharat gurunchi anukunta* (I think about the *Mahabharat*)."

One more X user wrote, "What is cooking between Tollywood Icon Star #AlluArjun and bollywood star #AamirKhan as both met at Aamir residence.. Any collaboration on cards? What do you think?"

Aamir's ambitious project Mahabharat

A few days ago, in an interview with The Hollywood Reporter India, when Aamir was asked about his ambition, the 60-year-old actor said, "I always believe in stories and I have always loved stories. So, my ambition is to continue to tell stories which touch our hearts. The one other ambition that I have which I am hoping to start work on this year, is working on the *Mahabharat*. That's one of my biggest ambitions. So, fingers crossed, hoping to start this year. It will take a while because just the writing process will take a few years."



Aamir's tamil debut

Aamir is all set to make his Tamil debut with the film *Coolie*. The movie stars Rajinikanth in the lead role and has Aamir has a cameo in the movie. Directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj, it also features Nagarjuna, Upendra, Soubin Shahir, Sathyaraj, and Shruti Haasan. The movie is slated to release on August 14, 2025. It will clash with Hrithik Roshan, Jr NTR, and Kiara Advani starrer *War 2*.

Nikita Dutta reflects on her childhood shaped by rules and restrictions

Grounded by discipline

FIANS

Actress Nikita Dutta opened up about her formative years, sharing that her childhood was marked by a strong sense of discipline, structure, and routine. Raised in an environment where rules and responsibilities took precedence, she credited this upbringing for instilling values of order and perseverance-traits that continue to influence her personal and professional life.

At a recent event, Nikita also shared an interesting revelation about her early ambitions-she once wanted to appear for the UPSC exams and pursue a career in the civil services. Long before she stepped into the world of showbiz, the actress envisioned herself serving the nation as a civil servant, reflecting the disciplined upbringing that shaped her early years.

Speaking about her career journey, the *Kabir Singh* actress stated, "I come from an Army family-everyone around me has served in the forces in some capacity. Naturally, growing up in that disciplined environment, I too was inclined towards a structured path. At one point, I even wanted to appear for the UPSC exams and pursue civil services. For someone like me, who has now chosen acting as a profession, the shift feels huge." "We grew up with so many rules, routines, and restrictions-everything was about discipline, duty, and order. Choosing a career in the creative arts, where unpredictability is the norm, was a complete departure from what I was used to. But somewhere, I think that grounding has helped me stay focused and resilient in an industry that often feels chaotic," Dutta added.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Nikita Dutta made her acting debut in 2014 with the romantic drama *Lekar Hum Deewana Dil*. She has appeared in films such as *Gold*, *Kabir Singh*, *The Big Bull*, and *Khakee: The Bihar Chapter*.

Most recently, she featured in the heist action thriller *Jewel Thief - The Heist Begins*. Directed by Kookie Gulati and Robbie Grewal, the film also starred Saif Ali Khan, Jaideep Ahlawat, and Kunal Kapoor. It premiered on Netflix on April 25, 2025.



Trailer for Very Parivarik Season 2 is out now

CJ Desk

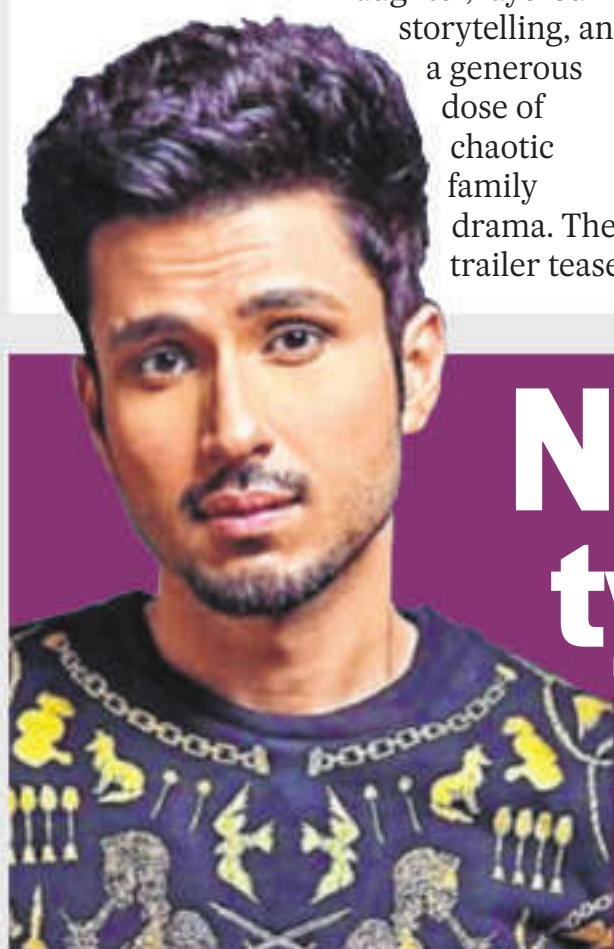
The Viral Fever (TVF), has officially released the trailer for Season 2 of its hit family comedy series, *Very Parivarik*. The new season is set to premiere on May 9, with fresh episodes dropping weekly.

After the success of its debut season, *Very Parivarik* returns with more laughter, layered storytelling, and a generous dose of chaotic family drama. The trailer teases

a meta-narrative where Shelly's life becomes a show within the show, continuing the heartfelt and humorous tone that struck a chord with audiences the first time around.

Speaking about the upcoming season, Vaibhav Bundhoo, creator and director, said, "Season 2 of *Very Parivarik* has a lot more jokes than *The Godfather* (Part III) and *Schindler's List* combined. I've been told to get therapy, but instead, I made this show. Please enjoy the trailer; it's entirely organic and sourced from local farmers."

The trailer is now live on TVF's official YouTube channel, inviting viewers to reunite with their favorite dysfunctional family — now back on a bigger, bolder, and funnier platform.



No more typecast

Amol Parashar opens up about being typecast for playing 'cute' and 'likeable' roles

CJ Desk

Actor Amol Parashar recently discussed how he was often typecast in roles that portrayed him as "cute" or "likeable." Parashar revealed that while many of the roles offered to him leaned towards this familiar image, he made a conscious effort to expand his range and take on more diverse, complex characters that break away from the stereotype.

Explaining his decision to embrace diversity in his roles, Parashar said, "Yes, those kinds of roles-sweet or likeable-were definitely coming my way quite often. I'd say a large majority of the roles offered were like that. But the work I've actually done hasn't always followed that trend." "Sometimes, audiences remember you for roles that are more visible or popular. For

example, the show I did with TVF ran for three seasons, so that stays with people. But then there's *Chitwan*, and *Sardar Udham*, in which the words 'cute' or 'likeable' don't even apply. Those were completely different genres and characters-like a legendary historical figure, a DJ, or even a delivery boy. I've tried to bring variety to the roles I choose," he explained.

Speaking about his latest project, *Gram Chikitsalay*, Amol shared, "As an actor, I always look for strong stories and well-written characters. That was the first draw. Secondly, the creative team-The Viral Fever (TVF) and Prime Video-are known for exceptional storytelling. The concept, the script, and the team behind the project were all deeply appealing. TVF has been creating some of the best content in the country for years. So, for me, there was no reason to say no to this show."



'It is a very dark place'

Bigg Boss 17 fame Soniya Bansal quits acting after 5 films

CJ Desk

Actress Soniya Bansal, who shot to fame with her participation in *Bigg Boss 17*, has decided to quit acting after working in five films. She stated that while she has the work and money, she was lacking peace in her life, and she now wants to be a life coach and guide people. In an interaction with ETimes, Soniya shared, "We are so much into doing everything for others that we forget ourselves. I realised I don't even know what my true purpose is anymore. In this race to be perfect, to stay relevant, and to earn more, I lost myself."

"Money, fame, popularity I had it all. But what I didn't have was peace. And what will you do with the money if you're not at peace? You may have everything externally, but if you're empty inside, it's a very dark place to be," she added. Opening up why she now wishes to be a life coach and spiritual healer, the actress stated, "I want to deeply study what I really want in life. This industry gave me recognition, but it didn't give me stillness. It didn't allow me to breathe. I don't want to pretend anymore. I want to live authentically, for myself and be a Life Coach and Spiritual Healer."

"You never know when your life will change. You never know when death might knock. And if we haven't lived truthfully by then, what's the point of this entire journey?" she quipped.



Unfiltered and furious

CJ Desk

Hina Khan on Tuesday took to Instagram to share her views on the sexual assault and murder that took place in Nishat, Srinagar, in Kashmir. The actress shared three Instagram stories in which she discussed about things like distinguish between rape and sexual assault, blaming alcohol for crimes, and more. She also once again posted about the Pahalgam attack in one of her stories.

The *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai* actress shared a long note which read, "Can someone for gods sake teach these Morons the Difference between sexual assault and rape.. A Rape is a Rape. A Murder is a Murder. A Sexual Assault may differ in description but it's just the Precursor of Rape. It only means that the perpetrators COULD NOT do it rather than DID NOT do it. A Rapist blames everything else than Himself. Don't act like that Criminal. Don't use Alcohol to give the Criminal a 'Free Get

Hina Khan condemns sexual assault and murder in Srinagar, urging society to stop justifying crimes and blaming alcohol or circumstances

Away Card'. Do not Justify Sexual Assault. Not in the name of Religion, Community, Geography or Attire. These Demons Exist everywhere, in every community, every religion..lurking for Opportunity. Alcohol causes many things but it doesn't make a Good Man a Rapist! Stop Alcohol Blaming and Escapism. Good Men can Handle Alcohol just as they Handle Superior Physical Power compared to a Woman, they use it to Protect Women. A Rapist is not Less than a Killer. He's More. Nothing justifies his actions. it's high time we call out what's happened without mincing words just because it's done by a Kashmiri Muslim and blame Alcohol for your so called Agenda (sic)."





OPERATION SINDOOR Stars salute forces

Actors Rajinikanth, Akshay Kumar, Ajay Devgn, Kangana Ranaut, and Allu Arjun praised Indian armed forces for carrying out missile strikes early Wednesday in Pakistan in retaliation against the barbaric terror attack in Pahalgam that killed 26 civilians. The Indian Army said nine terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, including Bahawalpur which is a major base of Jaish-e-Mohammad terror outfit, were hit under 'Operation Sindoor'.



"The fighter's fight begins... No stopping until the mission is accomplished! The entire NATION is with you. @PMOIndia @HMOIndia #OperationSindoor JAI HIND"
— Rajinikanth



"Saluting our Honourable Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi and our Indian forces. India stands tall and strong. Jai Hind!"
— Ajay Devgn



"Jai Hind. Jai Mahakaal!"
— Akshay Kumar



"Respect and gratitude to our armed forces"
— Kajol



"May justice be served. Jai Hind #OperationSindoor"
— Allu Arjun



"Jai Hind, Jai Sena #OperationSindoor"
— Vicky Kaushal

Surbhi slams comparisons with Dhanashree



Rashita Sahni

Surbhi Chandna, who was recently trolled for looking like Dhanashree Verma, hit back at haters as she called them 'jobless' for comparing the two. Major trolling began right after Dhanashree Verma and cricketer Yuzvendra Chahal officially got divorced on March 20, 2025. While netizens kept trolling Dhanashree on her social media pages, some reached Surbhi's account as well and started trolling her. Surbhi, in an exclusive conversation with *The Free Press Journal*, spoke about it and said, "It's neither her (Dhanashree's) fault that she looks like me if people think this way, nor is it my fault that I look like her. People are sitting at home and they're jobless, hence they're writing all this. What more do I say on this? There's nothing I can say. You're sort of looking for resemblance and you got it, so what now? People really write weird things and you know what? I've realised one thing, people are sitting at home and they have no work, so they will write whatever they want. They're jobless. That's it. I've nothing more to say."

Earlier, Surbhi had expressed her interest in meeting Dhanashree and discussing their resemblance. She had even joked about seven people in the world having similar faces and how she has found one in Dhanashree.



Scan QR code to watch the full interview on FPJ's YouTube channel

'We are nervous'

Kangana Ranaut lauds 'Operation Sindoor', urges public to pray for Indian armed forces amid conflict

CJ Desk

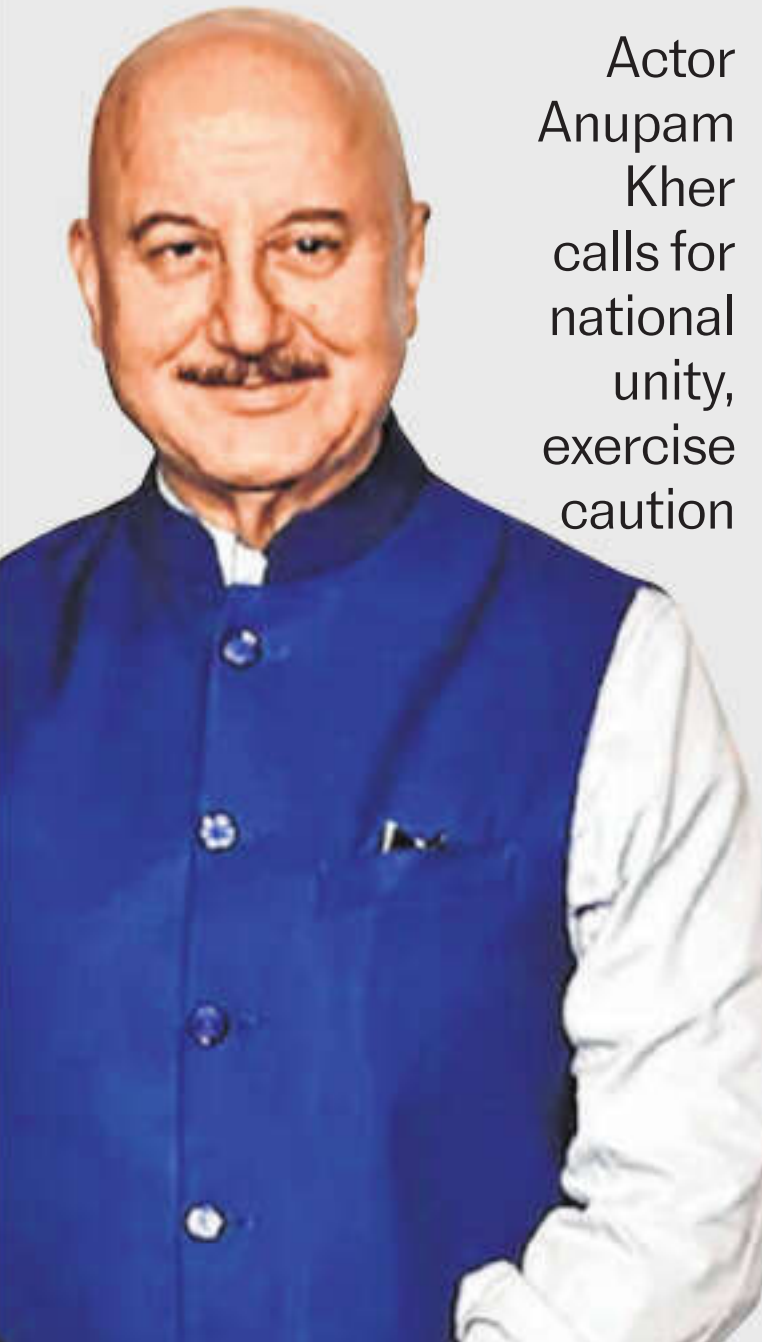
Actress-turned-politician hailed the Indian Army on Wednesday for the successful 'Operation Sindoor' — an operation carried out to obliterate terrorist camps in Pakistan. While at it, she stated that people are nervous since the country is at war now, but we must trust and pray for our *jawans*.

While interacting with the media in Delhi, Kangana said, "The country is at war right now, so obviously, we are all very nervous. But our security forces are protecting us, and we all must pray that may God protect them and help them succeed in their missions. We should all pray that the country be safe from all kinds of dangers."

"Humein khatra nahi hai, hum khud khatra hai," she added.

Explaining the meaning behind the name of the mission, the BJP MP shared, "PM Modi has named this mission 'Operation Sindoor', because the husbands of our mothers and daughters were killed right in front of their eyes and they were widowed by the terrorists. Those deaths are now being avenged now."

Earlier in the day, Kangana had saluted the Indian armed forces for targeting and attacking terror camps in Pakistan with precision. "Operation Sindoor: Zero tolerance to terror. The Indian Armed Forces launched a precision mission, Operation Sindoor; 9 terror camps across Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu & Kashmir neutralized (sic)," she wrote on X.



Actor Anupam Kher calls for national unity, exercise caution

CJ Desk

As the nation proceeds to next steps in the ongoing escalations, and possibly open diplomatic channels against its notorious neighbour Pakistan, veteran actor Anupam Kher has called for national unity, and to exercise caution.

On Wednesday, the actor took to his Instagram, and shared a video in which he spoke to the camera, and urged the countrymen to exercise restraint, and be careful while sharing information on social media.

He said, "Jai Hind, friends. Today, India has taken a decisive step under the leadership of our esteemed Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, and with the support of the Indian Army. Our country is a peaceful nation, yet it knows how to retaliate against its citizens and its brave soldiers with fierce terrorist at-

tacks. Those days are gone, when we used to remain silent. But today, India has changed. We all know this. I am making this video as a responsible Indian citizen."

He further mentioned that this action is against terrorism, and is for self-defense and justice. He shared, "In such circumstances, we also have some responsibilities, and it is very important for us to take care of some things. For example, No video, photo or message should be forwarded on social media without inspection. This spreads fear and confusion. No photo should be taken or shared in any army movements, bunkers or sensory places. No emergency services should be blocked. Call 10010102108 only in real emergencies. Stay away from high-risk areas, especially from border areas, until further instructions are received from the government. Only rely on government announcements and verified news sources".

SRK's stylish thanks

Shah Rukh Khan thanks Sabyasachi Mukherjee and his team for introducing him to the Met Gala

CJ Desk

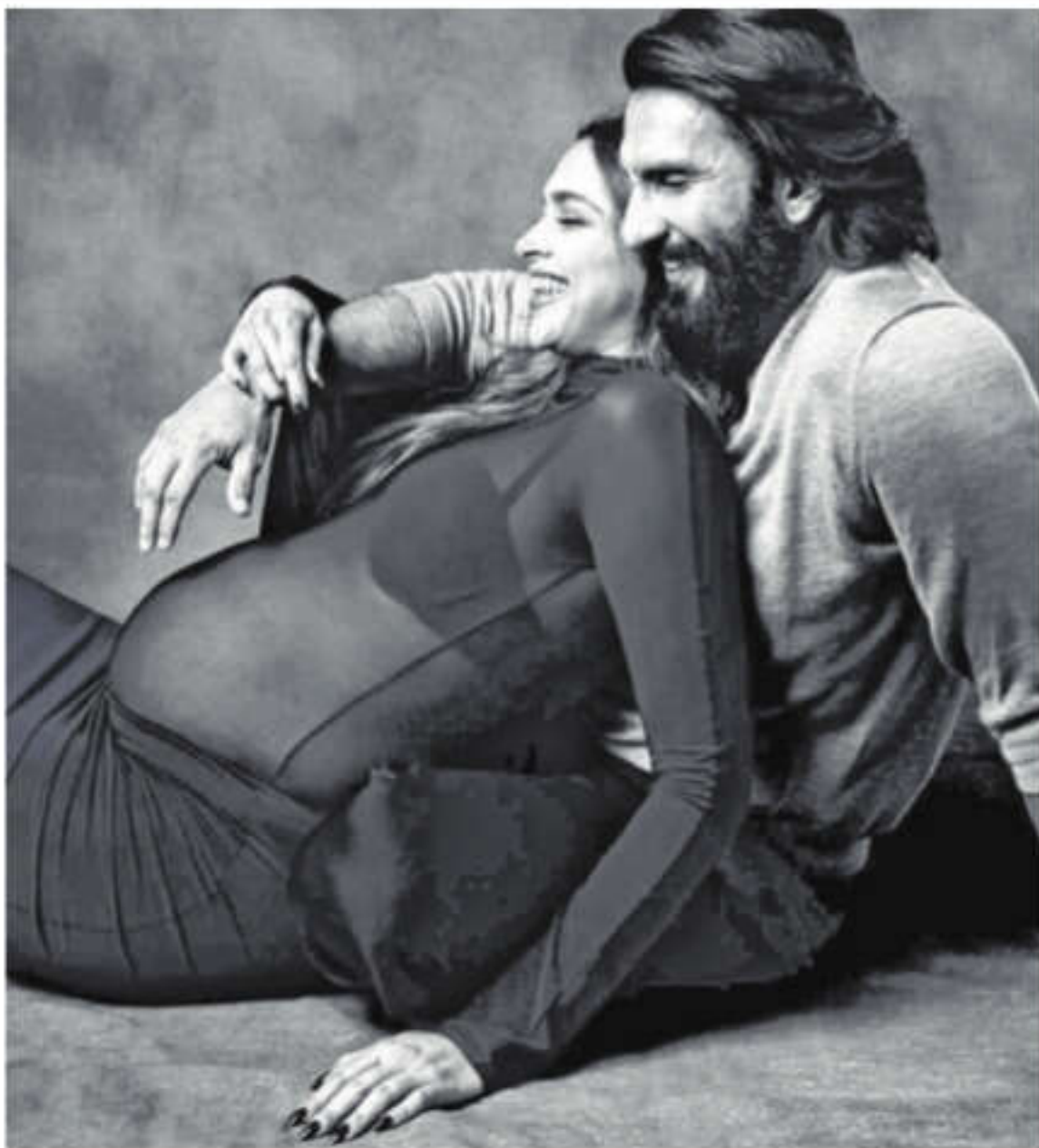
Shah Rukh Khan has become the talk of the town because of his debut at Met Gala 2025.

The actor's look at the red carpet surely stole the show, and his fans are going gaga over it. On Tuesday, SRK took to Instagram to share some pictures from a photo-shoot that he did at Met Gala, and in the caption he thanked designer Sabyasachi Mukherjee and his team.

SRK in the caption wrote, "Thx @sabyasachiofficial & ur whole team for introducing me to the Met Gala. It's not my 'space' but u made me feel so comfortable...becos u, like me, believe...Style & Fashion...is just being who you are. And all of u made me feel like a 'K' (sic)"

SRK's outfit at Met Gala 2025

The *Jawan* actor wore an all-black suit along with high-waist trousers, a black silk shirt, and a tailcoat. He wore multiple rings and necklaces, and one of them had an oversized K pendant which of course was referring to his tag of King Khan. While Priyanka Chopra and Alia Bhatt had attended Met Gala earlier, Shah Rukh Khan is one of the first Indian male actor to attend the event. Well, this year, along with him Priyanka, Diljit Dosanjh, and Kiara Advani also walked the red carpet at the Met Gala. Clearly, Indian celebs stole the show at an international event.



Sabyasachi Mukherjee

Deepika on motherhood

CJ Desk

Deepika Padukone is currently enjoying motherhood after welcoming her baby daughter, Dua Padukone Singh, on September 8, 2024. The actress, who stepped away from work after announcing her pregnancy in February, recently revealed that her pregnancy journey was 'complicated'.

In an interview with Marie Clarie, Deepika shared, "I went through a lot in the eight, nine months of being pregnant and delivery." Deepika revealed that she and Ranveer Singh took their time in choosing a name for their baby girl, ensuring they didn't settle for anything that didn't feel right for her. The actress added, "I think what was more important for us was to first hold the baby in our arms, allow her to sort of see this new world she's come into, allow her personality to start developing a little bit."

Deepika shared that she found inspiration for her daughter's name through poetry and music. She shared, "It felt like a beautiful summary of what she means to us and why she means what she means to us." Recalling the moment, Deepika shared how she texted Ranveer in middle of the night while he was on sleep, asking, "Dua?" He replied with a simple 'yes', and that was it.

Inside KJo's battle

Filmmaker opens up about battling dysmorphia, reveals reason behind rapid weight loss

CJ Desk

Filmmaker Karan Johar has always been vocal about his body image issues, and in a new podcast, he has opened up about battling body dysmorphia. He revealed that he feels disgusted to look at his body in the mirror, and that it is more than just feeling uncomfortable in one's body.

During his appearance on Raj Shamani's podcast, KJo shared, "I have body dysmorphia. It is a condition when you just cannot look at yourself in the mirror without any clothes on. It is when you are ashamed of your body and you are awkward without clothes on. I am still not okay with looking at my body and feeling good about it."

When he was asked about the difference between being mildly uncomfortable in one's body and having body dysmorphia, Karan explained, "You are uncomfortable, yes. But you don't feel disgusted looking at your body. That is body dysmorphia. *Mujhe ghnai hai. Main apne aap ko dekh hi nahi sakta bina kapdo ke.* Now it is better but I am still not completely okay with it."

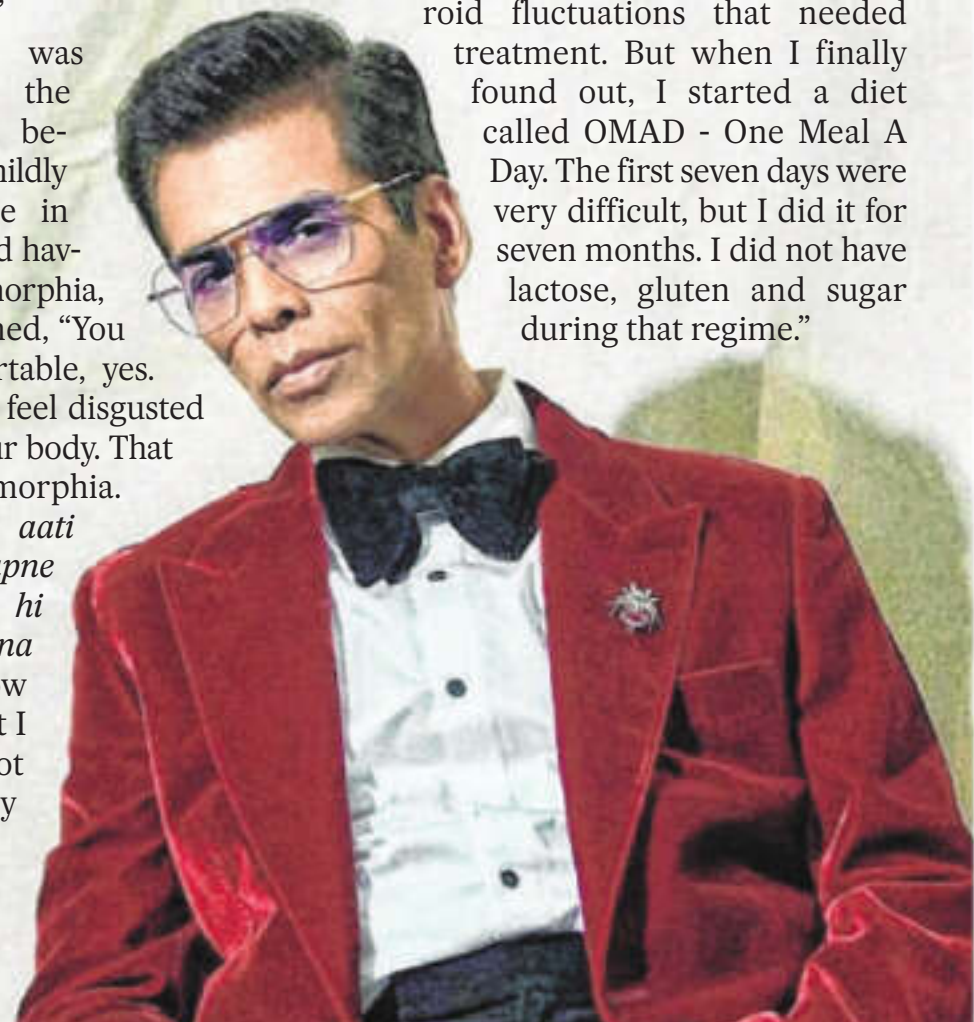
He added that he would wear oversized clothes

to hide his body, because he was "ashamed" of it.

Karan Johar's weight loss method

KJo also broke his silence on his drastic physical transformation, which made people wonder if was using drugs like ozempic to lose weight. The Dharma head honcho shared, "I have always been battling the bulge. I have done 1000 diets, 500 workouts, everything that was available to combat it. Years later, I did my blood works and found out that I had certain thyroid issues and other problems that I needed to fix, and I've now been working on correcting them."

He went on to say, "For 15-20 years, I had no idea that I had certain thyroid fluctuations that needed treatment. But when I finally found out, I started a diet called OMAD - One Meal A Day. The first seven days were very difficult, but I did it for seven months. I did not have lactose, gluten and sugar during that regime."



**Only you
can make
yourself
happy**

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SCHOOL

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Happiness is not something readymade. It comes from your own actions

- DALAI LAMA

CLIMATE CHANGE

Richest 10% bigger villains than poorest 50%

Ten per cent of the world's richest individuals have a higher carbon footprint than the poorest 50 per cent, leading to climate extremes such as heat waves and droughts, according to a study on Wednesday. The study, published in the journal Nature Climate Change, that the world's wealthiest 10 per cent are responsible for two-thirds of observed global warming since 1990. "Our study shows that extreme climate impacts are not just the result of abstract global emissions, instead we can directly link them to our lifestyle and investment choices, which in turn are linked to wealth," explains lead author Sarah Schongart. "We found that wealthy emitters play a major role in driving climate extremes, which provides strong



support for climate policies that target the reduction of their emissions," she added. An international team of researchers from Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Australia assessed the contribution of the highest emitting groups within societies.

The findings showed that the top 1 per cent of the wealthiest individuals globally contributed 26 times the global average to increases in monthly 1-in-100-year heat extremes globally. The research sheds new light on the links between income-based emissions inequality and climate injustice, illustrating how the consumption and investments of wealthy individuals have had disproportionate impacts on extreme weather events.

Did you Know?

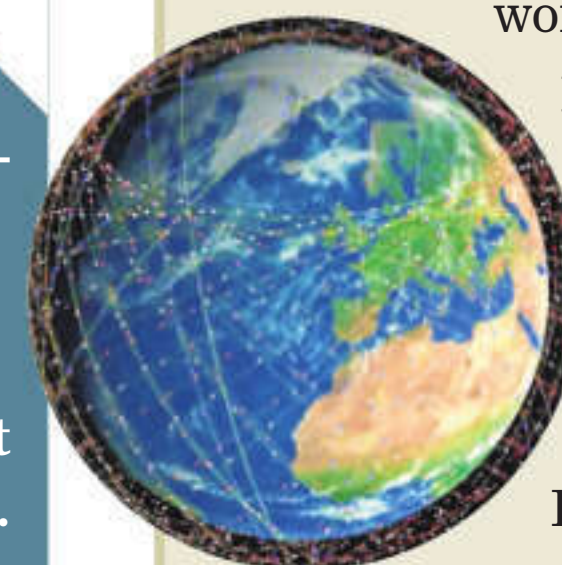
If everyone had emitted like the bottom 50 per cent of the global population, the world would have seen minimal additional warming since 1990

Together on war on terror

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday asserted that everyone is together in the war on terror. Her comments came after Union Home Minister Amit Shah's urgent meeting of chief ministers, chief secretaries and DGPs of states having borders with Pakistan and Nepal. The meeting was called in the wake of the strikes carried out by the Indian armed forces on terror targets in Pakistan.

Jio adds 21L subscribers

Telecom major Reliance Jio made an addition of about 2.17 million new subscribers out of 2.93 million for the entire industry in the month of March 2025. The telecom company leads with over 74 per cent market share of new subscriber additions. The company is driving industry growth with over 70 per cent market share across categories and continues to strengthen its market leadership further.



2 ANCIENT AYURVEDA TEXTS REVIVED

The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), under the Ministry of Ayush, on Wednesday announced it has revived two rare and significant Ayurvedic texts. The manuscripts Dravyaratnakara Nighau and Dravyanamakara Nighau were unveiled during an event organised by the RRAP Central Ayurveda Research Institute in Mumbai. "These texts are not just historical artefacts -- they are living knowledge systems that can transform contemporary healthcare approaches when studied and applied thoughtfully," said Prof. Vd. Rabinarayan Acharya, Director General, CCRAS, New Delhi. Acharya emphasised the importance of such revivals in bridging India's ancient wisdom with contemporary research frameworks.

GOVT GREENLIGHTS MUSK'S INTERNET

The government has issued Letter of Intent to Starlink for satcom services, sources said on Wednesday. Starlink is a satellite internet service developed by SpaceX -- the American aerospace manufacturer and space transportation company founded in 2002 by world's richest man Elon Musk. It provides high-speed, low-latency broadband internet worldwide using satellite technology. Sources told PTI that the Department of Telecom (DoT) has now issued Letter of Intent to Starlink. Unlike conventional satellite services that rely on distant geostationary satellites, Starlink utilises the world's largest low earth orbit or LEO constellation (550 km above earth).



I'm closely monitoring the situation & govt is fully prepared to deal with any eventuality

- MANOJ SINHA

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LOWER PRICES OF EGGS FIRST

Whoopi Goldberg has spoken out against President Donald Trump's proposal to implement a 100 per cent tariff on foreign-produced movies, calling it a move that would limit the US film industry. According to The Hollywood Reporter, in a recent interview, Goldberg shared her strong disapproval of the plan, which was announced by Trump on his Truth Social platform earlier this week.

"Could you please lower the price of eggs before you start this?" Goldberg said, referencing the ongoing rise in domestic consumer prices as she weighed in on Trump's proposal. 'The Color Purple' actress expressed concern that the tariffs would unnecessarily restrict creative freedom in the film industry and negatively impact filmmakers who often rely on international locations to tell their stories

ICC TEST RANKINGS

Jadeja top all-rounder, Bumrah No. 1 bowler

Star India spinner Ravindra Jadeja remained at the top, whereas Bangladesh cricketer Mehidy Hasan Miraz rose in the latest ICC Men's Test Player Rankings for all-rounders, as per the ICC official website. Miraz gained one place to move to second overall on the latest rankings for Test all-rounders on the back of his heroics for Bangladesh in their recent Test series against Zimbabwe, with Jadeja's lead at the top now under 100 rating points. The inform Miraz scored 116 runs and claimed 15 wickets across the two Tests and was rewarded on the updated ICC Men's Test Player Rankings by improving to a new career-best rating of 327 points and within 73 rat-



Miraz also rose two places to 24th overall on the updated list for Test bowlers, with Bangladesh teammates Taijul Islam (up to 16th) and Nay-eem Hasan (up to 54th).

ing points of No. 1-ranked Jadeja. India pacer Jasprit Bumrah maintained his lead as the No. 1-ranked Test bowler, with Zimbabwe spinner Vincent Masekesa entering the rankings for the first time just outside the top 100 following his impressive display on debut during the Bangladesh Test.

iOS app to simplify text

Google has introduced a new feature called Simplify in its iOS app, designed to help users better understand complex text online. This feature uses Google's Gemini AI model to generate simpler versions of highlighted text. The Simplify feature can be accessed by highlighting any text on a website and tapping the Simplify icon from the menu options. This feature is particularly useful for breaking down technical jargon, such as medical terms, into more digestible language. For example, Simplify can explain terms like "emphysema" and "fibrosis" in a way that's easy to understand. Google's testing showed that people found the simplified versions to be "significantly more helpful than the original complex text."



Schools in J&K border districts shut

Authorities on Wednesday ordered closure of educational institutions in three border districts of Kashmir as a precautionary measure, hours after Indian armed forces carried out missile strikes on terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir, officials said. The Kashmir University has postponed all its examinations scheduled for the day. Fresh date for the conduct of postponed papers shall be notified separately, a University spokesman said. Cluster University also postponed all examinations scheduled for the day. Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, on Wednesday ordered that all educational institutions in Baramulla, and Kupwara districts as well as in Gurez of Bandipora district will remain closed. Authorities have urged the public to remain alert and stay calm, and follow official advisories as a precautionary measure. Some schools around the Srinagar airport have also been closed.



Russia adds 2K seats for Indian med students

Russia continues to be the top choice for Indian students seeking medical education abroad, and Russian universities have a long-standing reputation for providing high-quality medical. Nearly 2,000 additional seats have been added to accommodate the growing number of students keen on pursuing medical courses in Russian universities, Consul General Valerii Khodzhaev of the Consulate General of the Russian Federation in Chennai said on Wednesday.



day. education worldwide, he said at an event in Chennai. With the number of Indian students taking up medical courses rising every year, Russia has in-

creased the number of seats from 8,000 to 10,000 in 2024, he said. The increase in seats reflects the growing demand for medical education in Russia.



KHELO INDIA YOUTH GAMES

MEDAL HAT-TRICKS FOR HARSHITA, SUHANI

Harshita Jakhar achieved a golden hat-trick at the Khelo India Youth Games 2025 cycling events, being held at the Velodrome, Indira Gandhi Stadium in Delhi. In her debut participation itself, the 18-year-old from Rajasthan has made the KIYG a memorable one for herself. She won the gold on Wednesday in the 2km Individual Pursuit event, recording a time of 02:35.178. The silver medalist - Bhumika of Haryana registered time of 02:41.621. "Since I'm transitioning to the senior event, the competition hasn't been too tough for me to be honest," Harshita, who is a part of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports' Target Asian Games Group (TAGG) program, told SAI Media. The bronze medal in the 2km Individual Pursuit event, meanwhile, belonged to Suhani Kumari of Bihar. This was incidentally also Suhani's third



Did you Know?
Harshita's cousin brother Aditya meanwhile bagged gold in the 200m boys' sprint event and in the process, clinched his 2nd gold of KIYG 2025. He earlier won the yellow metal in the 1km Time Trial event.

medal in the cycling events - having won silver earlier in the 7.5km Scratch Race as well as a team silver in the girls' sprint. "I have enjoyed playing here. The tournament has been very well organised and I have tried my best in inspiring Bihar to bag more medals, through my feat this time," mentioned the 18-year-old Suhani, currently a trainee of Sports Authority of India National Centre of Excellence (NCOE) Patiala.

Indian archers to play for gold

India's men's and women's teams booked their spots in the compound team finals at the second stage of the Archery World Cup in Shanghai after respective semifinal wins. The men's team featuring ever-consistent Abhishek Verma alongside Ojas Pravin Deotale and Rishabh Yadav narrowly defeated Denmark, in a tight semifinal. The men's team, which topped the qualification leaderboard with 2134, received the first round bye and began their campaign with a 239-232 quarterfinal win over Great Britain. The women's team, which had also received a bye in the opening round, reached the gold medal match by outshooting Great Britain.



Bright start for Kidambi

Star Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth started his campaign on a bright note with a straight game win over as he, along with a host of other youngsters, progressed to the second round of the Taipei Open Super 300 Badminton Tournament in Taipei on Wednesday. World No. 61 Srikanth, who is battling an extended lean patch, dispatched fellow Indian Sankar Subramanian, a 2022 world junior championships silver medalist, to enter the second round.

The 32-year-old, a silver-medallist at the 2021 World Championships, will face another Indian Ayush Shetty, a 2023 world junior championships bronze medallist.



IPL TO PROCEED AS PER SCHEDULE

Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025, which is close to its business end, will proceed as planned amid the escalating tensions between India and Pakistan. There are a number of overseas players and commentators present in India for the IPL, which began on March 22.

The cricketing extravaganza, which has 74 matches in its roster of which 56 have already taken place across various venues, concludes on May 25.



BCCI WISHES ALL THE BEST TO ROHIT

Team India skipper Rohit Sharma has formally announced his retirement from Test cricket, drawing the curtain on a remarkable chapter of his international career. Following the announcement, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) extended its gratitude and best wishes to the veteran player. The BCCI posted on their X handle,

"Thank you, Captain, End of an era in whites! He will continue to lead India in ODIs. We are proud of you, Hitman."



QUICK NEWS

Satirical take on Hollywood

Streaming service Apple TV+ has greenlit "The Studio", a satirical series exploring the inner workings of Hollywood, for a second season. The renewal comes two weeks ahead of the show's season finale, which is set for May 21. "The Studio" features Seth Rogen as Matt Remick, a movie executive.

Actors praise Indian op

Actors Rajinikanth, Akshay Kumar, Kangana Ranaut, and Allu Arjun praised Indian armed forces for carrying out missile strikes early Wednesday in Pakistan in retaliation against the barbaric terror attack in Pahalgam that killed 26 civilians. South superstar Rajinikanth praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the success of 'Operation Sindoor

Precision, restraint

Aclaimed filmmaker Shekhar Kapur has praised India's measured and confident response to the Pahalgam terrorist attack, commending its precision and restraint from war rhetoric. He stated that Operation Sindoor was a targeted strike against the territories and organizations that supported the perpetrators responsible for the killing of innocent civilians.

Best Podcast added to Golden Globes

Golden Globes 2026 ceremony will be a bit different as a new category has been added to it. The organisers announced a new award category honoring the best podcast of the year, broadening its recognition of creative storytelling. The category will debut at the 83rd Golden Globe Awards, scheduled for January 11, 2026. Organizers said the move reflects the growing influence and reach of podcasts in the entertainment industry. "As the world of entertainment continues to evolve, we are excited to recognize new forms of storytelling," said Helen Hoehne, president of the Golden Globes.





Your (Rohit Sharma) presence and impact will echo in that dressing room forever

- RISHABH PANT

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TO CONTINUE PLAYING IN ODIs

Rohit bids goodbye to Test cricket

Rohit Sharma on Wednesday announced his retirement from Test cricket with immediate effect ending all speculations about his future in the longest format and leaving India in the need of a new captain for the upcoming five-match series against England.

The 38-year-old was India's most prolific Test batter in the second half of his career, scoring 4301 runs in 67 Tests with 12 hundreds and 18 half-centuries at an average of 40.57. Having already retired from T20 Internationals after the World Cup last year, Rohit will now only be seen

leading India in the ODI format. "Hello everyone, I would just like to share that I am retiring from Test cricket. It's been an absolute honour to represent my country in whites. "Thank you for all the love and support over the years. I will continue to represent India in the ODI format," he posted on Instagram

with a picture of his Test cap after PTI's newsbreak. Rohit captained India to the World Test Championship final against Australia and had a fairly decent run in the format save the last couple of indifferent series against New Zealand at home and the Border-Gavaskar showdown against Australia earlier this year.

Did you Know?
Rohit endured a particularly difficult run during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy where he had to drop himself from the playing XI owing to poor form

IPL match at Dharamshala gets government nod

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has received clearance from the Indian government to host match between Punjab Kings (PBKS) and Delhi Capitals (DC) match on Thursday of the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) in Dharamshala at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium. However, the May 11 match has been shifted from

Dharmshala to Mumbai, and the new date for the match will be updated soon. As Dharamshala is located near the India-Pakistan border, there might be a threat at this venue, so there is a chance that the Punjab-based franchise will play their remaining home matches at a different place. "BCCI gets clearance from the government to host tomorrow's match in Dharamshala, but the May 11 match shifted to Mumbai from Dharmshala, the fresh date for the match will be updated soon," BCCI sources told ANI.



INDIA SEAL PLACE IN ODI TRI-SERIES

Jemimah Rodrigues' smashed a superb 123, while Amanjot Kaur picked 3-59 on her international comeback as India beat South Africa by 23 runs and sealed their spot in the final of women's ODI tri-series at the R Premadasa International Cricket Stadium on Wednesday. Pushed into batting first, India were reduced to 50/3 in seven overs. But Jemimah, coming out to bat at number five, stepped up with her variety of sweeps and beautiful shots over extra cover, apart from proactive strike rotation, to hit her second ODI hundred in just 88 balls.



English players want to leave Pak

English players involved in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) want to leave the country following the precision strikes by India during Operation Sindoor in retaliation to the Pahalgam terror attack in Kashmir, which claimed 26 innocent lives. Hours after the midnight strike by Indian armed forces on terror infrastructures in the country, the Pakistan

Cricket Board on Wednesday vowed to continue holding the remaining matches of the Pakistan Super League. However, the English players in PSL face a decision over whether to remain in the country. Seven England players -- Sam Billings, James Vince, Tom Curran, David Willey, Chris Jordan, Tom Kohler-Candmore and Luke Wood - are involved in PSL.



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